The Emancipation of Egypt

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THE EMANCIPATION OF EGYPT

BY

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"I AM not one of those who hold that everything that has been done in Egypt since 1882 is due to Englishmen. I am the first to recognise the very important part which has been played in the revival of the country by natives and other Europeans. I do not believe that the indefinite continuance of British control in its present form is essential to the ultimate welfare of Egypt."

LORD MILNER, *England in Egypt*,
6th Edition, 1899, p. 167.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

LORD MILNER has rightly said that Egypt is the land of contrasts. There is probably no other corner in the world where there are to be found so many conflicting facts or so many discordant ideas. These contrasts are often so astonishing as to almost border on the grotesque. It behoves the observer to be upon his guard, for in no country is a hasty judgment liable to result in errors so profound, or to lead to such absolute misconceptions. He who would really look into the annals of Egypt during the century which has just closed, and would seriously endeavour to gain a clear, fair and accurate idea of their meaning, must keep a cool head. If he dips into the mass of literature, or tries to master a tithe of the innumerable books and pamphlets in which the latter-day history of Egypt has been distorted or caricatured, he will see that he must struggle hard to avoid being carried off his feet by the tide of wilful or unintentional prejudice. From the very outset, the fair-minded observer must endeavour to place himself at the right standpoint. This is evidently not an easy matter for him to do. Most of the literature, which is his rough material, consists in journalistic attempts to blow either the French, English or native trumpet, regardless of truth

or falsehood. Of such books there has been enough and more than enough. These passionate partisan outpourings achieve little; they advance the interests of none, and least of all those which they profess to champion.

The really well-meaning observer must, then, sponge his mental slate clean of all rank prejudice; he must divest himself of all those preconceived notions which may help to point a phrase in some party journal; may lend colour to some violent anti-English, anti-French or anti-Egyptian diatribe; serve well enough to redeem or condemn some particular policy, or blacken or whitewash the reputation of some particular politician. Hitherto, the mass of polemics, despite its embittered tone, has achieved few results, and what few results it has achieved have not been happy. It has excited national passion, produced a certain amount of useless agitation, and there things have ended. In the vast and substantial interests acquired by all the great European nations in Egypt it has effected no kind of change.

It is the peculiar task of any one investigating Egyptian affairs, that he must take into consideration not only a complex native civilisation, as far as that exists, but at the same time seek to understand that heterogeneous concourse of strangers from every clime which has congregated about the banks of the Nile, and, moreover, he must take into account the considerable interests in Egypt of Turkey, France and England, of Germany and Italy, of Austria and Belgium, and in a lesser degree of other European nations.

If, then, the merely historical student—the man who has a desire to form a clear and accurate notion of bygone times—is confronted with such formidable difficulties, how much more arduous must be the task of

him who would only use the past history of Egypt as a stepping-stone by which to arrive at a conception of the country's future as it may be, or as it ought to be. The student viewing Egyptian history of the nineteenth century is confronted with almost insuperable difficulties. His authorities are, as often as not, in violent contradiction. But that is far from being the worst. Much more misleading, much less easy of refutation, are the half-truths of which these chroniclers are so fond. It needs unusual powers of insight and a rare faculty for weighing testimony and balancing probabilities to unravel the tangled skein. There are not infrequently wholesale omissions; but when these omissions are glaringly manifest they may often be supplemented from other sources. It is when the omissions are skilfully made, and yet more skilfully concealed, that they are most dangerous. If gifted with a capacity for separating the grain from the chaff, of discriminating between fact and fiction, and endowed with a penetrative instinct enabling him to discern what is certainly right, the historian may be successful in forging for himself a chain of irrefutable trustworthy evidence. It is thus, and thus only, that he can thread his way securely in any attempt to forecast the future. He may have complete confidence in his chain, but he also requires confidence in his unfailing judgment of the relative importance of the various factors of Egyptian history. He must be quite steady, preserve an impeccable equilibrium, or else he is undone. When we attempt, as we shall attempt in the present work, to foreshadow, anticipate or suggest the probable future of Egyptian affairs, or what we consider the future of Egypt should be, we shall find that our balancing-rod

needs to be very evenly, very justly poised, our feet must be planted warily, and our eyes must be undeviatingly fixed upon the true necessities—national as well as international—of Egypt.

We cannot hope to attain to this sureness of foothold unless we have first thoroughly braced our minds by a sound and equitable survey of the last thirty years of Egyptian history. What we need is an unbiassed and fundamental appreciation of both French and British influence, which we can alone obtain by broadening our intellects and shaking them completely free from all political and pseudo-national cant. We must view the great problem in the only light in which it can be fruitfully and effectively viewed—in the light of international interests and history. We shall, then, as a kind of preliminary training, and before we bring them to bear upon this difficult problem, cast a rapid glance over those last few decades of Egypt's history. We shall, at the same time, lay a foundation upon which to work, or, might we not say, create for ourselves an *état d'âme* which may enable us to cast, with a fair degree of accuracy, the horoscope of that interesting but much-troubled land.

It is but natural that we should begin with a cursory appraisement of French influence in Egypt. The part played by that country in Egyptian politics extends further back than that of other European Powers, and a rapid review of its importance since the Napoleonic expedition of 1798 presents no very considerable difficulty. As has been very elaborately pointed out by Lord Milner himself, in his well-known book *England in Egypt*, the benefits material and intellectual which Egyptian civilisation has received at the hands of the French are immense. They are very generally recog-

nised and acknowledged. The Egyptian civilisation of to-day is French almost to the back-bone. Anything but the briefest and most succinct recapitulation of what France has done for Egypt would be completely superfluous. Who has not heard of François Champollion, to whose learned enthusiasm we owe our capacity to read with comparative facility the hieroglyphic annals of ancient Egypt? The renewed interest which this discovery caused in Egypt is not to be too lightly reckoned. The reforms introduced by Mehemet Ali and his dynasty were carried out, if not exclusively, at least for the most part, by Frenchmen. French engineers were set at the head of all the works and French officials placed in control of most of the administrative departments. What is generally recognised as one of the supreme achievements of modern technical ingenuity, the construction of the Suez Canal, was French in conception, French in design, and completed by Frenchmen. The irrigation schemes to which Egypt owes half of its present-day prosperity were inaugurated by the French. The whole idea of Nile barrages and dams is French; and, albeit finally carried out by British enterprise, the attempts which paved the way to these broader designs, and which were, in themselves, anything but contemptible, were French in their inception. The educational system is thoroughly French; and, through the schools, the language of France has spread until it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that French is still the predominant European language of that land of innumerable tongues. French is the tongue generally affected by the upper classes; and perhaps a striking, and not generally known, illustration of how French has sunk into the very soul of the country is that it is even used

by British officials in their official reports—yet another anomaly in this home of anomalies. But France has not limited herself to earning Egyptian wages; she has bestowed something more than her abilities and talents on the country. With her own capital Egypt would never have made the astounding headway which she has made during the last fifty years. European finance was bound to come to her aid, and of more than a hundred millions of European money lying at interest in Egypt the major portion is that of French investors. We cannot here trace the innumerable other channels through which French influence has permeated the land. These channels are social, economic and scientific, the latter being gloriously illustrated by the French School of Archæological Museum at Cairo under the governance of the most learned and interesting of French Egyptologists, M. Maspero, whose *History of Ancient Egypt* is the standard work on the subject, and a model of practical erudition. If anything were needed to disprove the current but profoundly erroneous notion that the French are no colonisers by nature, such evidence might be forthcoming from Egypt. It were idle to contend that a country which has so thoroughly imbibed ideas which originated in France should not possess strong ties of sympathy, as well as of admiration for her; and in matters of empire-building nobody can fail to see how important is the capacity of the Imperial nation of attaching people to the empire.

We see what the influence of France has been, and beyond this it is quite superfluous for us to go. We need not trace the changeful phases of France's policy in Egypt, or discuss the alternating attitude adopted by successive French ministers. It is at present immaterial

to us whether the conduct of de Freycinet was inopportune, dilatory or precipitate, and it will be more to the point to treat French policy towards Egypt together with our appreciation of British policy, to which we shall now proceed.

If it were possible to read the story of "British aggression" in Egypt as it has been penned by writers whose implacable hostility to England has rendered them blind to their own absurdity; if it were possible to read the story without at once being provoked to uncontrollable mirth by the broad humour of its incongruities; if it were possible for a brief space to become oblivious of all well-established facts, to make our minds a blank, and to read those writers in all seriousness: there are probably few who would rise from the perusal without a painful conviction that the iniquities of the human race are beyond all hope. They would, besides, discover, by this assumption, that within the brief period of little more than a century, one little plot of island earth should have produced a succession of ministers whose diabolic schemes would have raised a blush of shame on the cheeks of a Machiavelli, or perhaps have caused him a pang of envy that his principles, which until then had been held to be the most unprincipled ever yet advanced, should have been out-distanced by a series of not very remarkable English statesmen. Supposing the reader had thus far missed the humour of the tale, he would be set still further wondering when he came to observe that these selfsame statesmen had not overstepped the customary limits of diplomatic guile in their manifold dealings with the rest of the world. All their diabolic cunning had been visited upon poor Egypt. At this point, probably, the most credulous of readers would

begin to see that he was being mystified. And yet there are scores of such throughout Europe who still accept the old Egyptian legend as gospel truth; still peruse these pages of wild recrimination without apparently an idea that they are being deluded, that their anger is being fanned into flame, and that their tears are being made to flow where there is no call either for anger or for tears. It will be our constant endeavour to avoid all that might savour of reproach or recrimination. We have no wish to censure what has been done in the past; but it is our duty to point out that there is no ground of justification whatever for the statement that England has carried out a long-meditated Machiavellian policy with regard to Egypt. We shall show, very briefly, that Egypt has never at any moment formed the principal objective in English foreign affairs; that the measures adopted by England with regard to Egypt have been inspired by the necessities of a far wider policy, into which Egypt unavoidably entered, but of which it was at no time the end and aim. The charges of Machiavellian cunning laid at the door of English Ministers of Foreign Affairs will either, in due course, be refuted or will refute themselves. We shall show that England has not taken more advantage of the weak position of Egypt than any other European country has taken of its weaker neighbours, and that whether England's interference in Egypt has been beneficial to that country or not—a point on which we shall at a later stage enlarge—that interference has been justifiable, and, indeed, for England, a matter of imperial life or death.

The present work is not a historical disquisition, and it will, consequently, not be our business to do more

than remind the reader of the brilliant steps, military and political, by which between 1757 and 1764, the English succeeded in making themselves masters of practically the whole of north-eastern India. All that we would point out is that, from that moment, Egypt was inevitably destined to figure as an important factor in British policy. It must not be forgotten that although the opening of the Suez Canal practically sounded the death-knell of all but an insignificant traffic with India round the Cape of Good Hope, none the less, long before this, the Cape route had not been by any means the sole line of communication with the Far East. Where speed was a consideration, it was out of the question to choose the long and uncertain sea-voyage rather than the much-curtailed itinerary, *viâ* Egypt, when this latter route was unimpeded. Every year we can see the Mediterranean line becoming more and more popular, and the number of passengers tran-shipping and passing overland *viâ* Cairo to Suez increasing rapidly. As England became more and more powerful in India as the years went on, when, from 1780 to 1783, she secured the Carnatic, it became of paramount importance to her to make absolutely sure of the overland route. Her earlier acquisitions had already pressed upon her the necessity of getting the Cape entirely into her hands, and had made her covetous of the French island of Mauritius. The possession of this latter by a hostile Power as a coign of vantage from which an enemy's squadron could issue forth to fight the British fleet in Indian seas, or from which privateers could harass the British mercantile marine, or even make descents upon her Indian dominions, were things which England, once launched upon an imperial career, could

not for a moment tolerate. That she should have strained every nerve to secure these two essential positions we cannot regard as in any way Machiavellian. It has become such a common-place to say, now-a-days, that international politics are ruled by interest alone, and by no factitious international code of morals, that one hardly likes to re-assert what appears so obvious. It is out of the range of the present discussion for us to decide whether empire-building is morally defensible at all; it suffices us that empire-building is the accepted goal of most modern European nations. If the goal is morally reprehensible, all are tarred with the same brush, and we cannot find more fault with one than with another.

We have not to justify the English footing in India; but once that footing established, England could not contemplate with equanimity the presence of a powerful enemy, or even of a potential adversary, astride the closest line of communication with India. In time of actual war such an enemy could strike at India before English naval reinforcements were half-way from Plymouth to the Cape. It was, then, hardly to be expected that England would tamely submit to the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt, which presaged, and that at no distant date, the entire loss of every shred of her Indian possessions. The inevitable rejoinder to the challenge of Bonaparte was the battle of the Nile, and once more the direct path to India lay free. We fail to trace that Machiavellian profundity or perfidy which has been found, thus early, in British policy. The line which England took was certainly the line which any other nation would have taken in kindred circumstances. England did not use her success in order herself to

occupy Egypt. Perhaps she was unable, or could not get up sufficient courage, to strike so decisive a blow. To this the events of a later day supply us, as we shall see in the sequel, with an ample explanation. For forty years the cunning British Foreign Office remained quiescent. Not until the power of Mehemet Ali again threatened to renew the old situation of the end of the preceding century, was it again stirred into action. Much as the conduct of the British Government towards the victorious Pasha has been condemned and held up to obloquy, it is difficult to see what there is to so severely criticise. It is impossible to look upon that conduct as anything more or less than a series of self-defensive measures. That England deliberately intended or desired to damage the prospects of Egypt is quite untenable; but that England should allow the same state of affairs with which she had been menaced under Napoleon to be renewed under Mehemet Ali was equally out of the question. It could hardly be expected that she would suddenly, out of problematic philanthropy, reverse the policy which she had been pursuing for years, and with which she had come to be identified. A strong hand in Egypt which was not her own she could not tolerate; it mattered little whether it was the hand of the Emperor of France, or the hand of a brilliant Albanian. If anything, perhaps, there was even more peril for her in the latter case. Mehemet made no concealment of his cordial leanings towards France; he steeped Egypt, as we have already shown, in French civilisation, and that so thoroughly that it will be a long day, if ever, before Egypt loses her Gallic proclivities. There could be little doubt on which side Mehemet Ali would range himself should European complications supervene.

Could it be seriously anticipated that England should tamely look on whilst the influence of France was being gradually consolidated at the one point which was vital to her empire? At any moment, when it might chance to please her, France might have snapped the narrow thread by which the British possessions were held together. What, then, is the justification for the violent outcry raised against Lord Palmerston? His diplomacy may have been subtle enough even to hoodwink the French, but it cannot therefore be set down as unprecedentedly wicked. The day had not yet come when it was the business of the British Minister for Foreign Affairs to play the game of France. The Conference of London of 1840 was nothing more nor less than the natural sequence of fifty years of consistent Eastern policy.

In the word "consistent" we touch the very heart of the matter. It is the consistency of British Foreign policy which has been misinterpreted as Machiavellianism. Because England has often been able to play a waiting game—to await the moment of her adversary's weakness before displaying her own hand—she has often been credited with a subtlety, to which, in reality, she has no claim. When her adversary has been stricken at the rift in his armour, and when he has been unable to defend himself, he has immediately descried in his own discomfiture another sign of England's diabolical diplomacy. As a matter of fact, had he kept his eyes open, he might very well have known that the blow would fall—as soon as there was any prospect of its falling to England's advantage. We have, then, to inquire why England has been able to play this deliberate game, whilst evincing no sign of haste or precipitation.

Why, if England has been able so to manœuvre with hitherto apparently signal success, has she found no continental imitators? Surely the rest of the European Powers were not above taking a leaf out of their opponent's book, if they could do so with benefit to themselves. On looking more closely into the question, we shall very soon see that England has occupied a privileged position among European nations. It is a position which has long been noticed by English statesmen and deliberately turned to profit. Disraeli himself, who, when writing in a lighter vein, is often caught letting fall the key to some more serious political doctrine, dwells in various passages of his novel *Sybil* on the immense leverage given to England by what he calls the shelving of the Church and the Crown. It might be considered almost frivolous to quote a novel in so serious a matter, but when politicians take to novel-writing the case is somewhat different. For close upon four centuries England has had long stretches of unbroken peace at home. Since the final ejection of the Catholic Stuarts in 1688, that peace may be said to have been complete. Nothing but the most transient and trifling commotions have ruffled the mirror-like surface of home politics. Brief agitations have arisen from time to time, threatening to draw troubles in their train; but such agitations have, at all times, been rapidly and effectually allayed. Since the Union with Scotland (1707), what was long a menacing foreign frontier has almost ceased to be regarded as a boundary-line at all. Never were two nations so thoroughly and fraternally welded into one. The abortive Stuart rebellions quickly subsided without causing more than momentary alarm, and leaving the

internal calm even deeper than before. No caste-bound nobility was there to lead to social cataclysms, and the one socialistic movement which appeared big with greater things—the Chartist rising in the forties of the last century—ended in nothing but an insignificant police fray. Ecclesiastical questions which, on the continent, have always been present as the politician's bugbear—liable to cross and thwart his most cherished plans at the critical moment—have long been finally shelved in England. The statesman in England who has been bent upon carrying out some far-reaching foreign policy—some policy which for its consummation required the patient and persistent labour of years—has been able to set about his work with entire confidence in its power of fulfilment. He has been free to devote his whole undivided energy to the task. He has had his path made comparatively easy. He has not had to take account of awkward internal conjunctures and disturbances, which might bring the whole fabric of his statecraft tumbling about his ears without any inherent defect of its own. It is, in no small degree, to this absence of all fortuitous perturbing elements, which no amount of political foresight could countervail, that we may ascribe the general success of English foreign policy. That policy has never been sacrificed to faults which were not its own. It has been weighed and approved, or found wanting, as the case may be, on its own merits.

If we institute a comparison between British foreign policy and that of continental countries during the past two centuries, we shall probably have little difficulty in recognising it as an axiom that unbroken peace at home is the essential condition for final success abroad. There

is no Power on the mainland of Europe which can look complacently upon frontiers and say that they are likely to remain unassailed during any number of years. Unless constantly and unceasingly upon its guard, every Power is dangerously vulnerable. This fact at once enormously diminishes the amount of forces at its disposal for striking afar; almost all its forces must be ever ready to parry a blow at home. Neither Germany nor France can venture to despatch a couple of hundred thousand men, or even a far less number, over seas without perilously impairing its internal equilibrium. The absence of such a force abroad immediately entails diplomatic submissiveness at home. France has once or twice tried the experiment. It is doubtful whether the results would make a French statesman feel justified in attempting it again. The Napoleonic campaign in Egypt soon turned out incompatible with strength and stability in Europe, and Bonaparte before long felt himself compelled to relinquish his extra-European enterprises. The French expedition to Mexico can, without exaggeration, be set down as paid for at the price of Metz and Sedan. Had France, in 1866, been able to act decisively on the Continent, who knows but what the whole course of European politics might have been changed, and the war of 1870 averted? As it was France stood in an enfeebled position at the crucial moment, paralysed on her Eastern border by her activity in the Western hemisphere.

We have dwelt upon the external difficulties which preclude France from following up a whole-hearted scheme of distant foreign policy. Even more fatal are the divisions at home. France never succeeded in shelving the Catholic Church as did the Tudors in

England; for it would be rash to hazard any prediction as to what will ultimately come of the present movement. No country has been more crossed and undermined by the Church than France. We cannot here go into details which, interesting though they be, do not immediately relate to the matter in hand. But, be it remarked, every other European Power is afflicted internally with kindred clogs and hindrances. Germany's vitals are gnawed by the spreading canker of socialism; Austria by the terror of disruption. Their statesmen are compelled to make up for the weakness of the position of their respective countries—for their inability to embark upon any far-reaching policy which may require long years to bring it to a head—by dexterously taking advantage of such occasions as may be offered to them. England, as we have shown, does not labour under the same disabilities, but she is judged as if her situation were identical. Hence, when British policy is crowned with success, England is accounted guilty of Machiavellian machination. Nothing could be further from the truth. All that England has done is that she has waited. She has espoused a very simple, very straightforward plan, and as most plans—certainly in international politics—involve taking the advantage of somebody else's weakness, so has England profited by her opportunities. When she has encountered an obstacle in another European Power, all that she has had to do is to bide her time until that Power, as was sooner or later bound to come to pass, felt compelled, for internal reasons, to give way, and England was permitted to resume her interrupted march.

The mistake made by most of England's critics is that they have entirely mistaken her aim. They have

allowed the idea to permeate their minds that England has long meditated the final annexation of Egypt. But surely, to use a very humble but well-worn proverb, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." We may readily admit that after the battle of Aboukir Bay (1798), England was not in a position to seize Egypt as the meed of victory. Whether such was the case or not is, however, immaterial. We may even go so far as to admit that she was not strong enough in 1840, as was very probably the case. This is immaterial likewise. But what we cannot admit is, that if her designs on Egypt were those of a conqueror, she should have neglected the golden opportunity afforded by the events of 1870. Her ability to possess herself of the coveted prize, had she been so minded, cannot be legitimately disputed. Who was there then who could have even pretended to offer the slightest resistance?

It may, indeed, be said that it was very doubtful which way the fortunes of the Franco-German war would go; that England feared lest France should get the best of it, and afterwards call England to account. Nothing could be more absurd. On the 19th of July came the declaration of war; and on the 2nd of September, with the fall of Sedan, all hopes or fears of French success were at an end. Still, England did not make the slightest move towards occupying Egypt. Need we seek for the reason? If we are to suppose that the objective of seventy years of British policy was the occupation of Egypt, surely it requires some explanation why England did not seize Egypt when there was no longer any Power to bar the way. Is it not infinitely easier to suppose that certain people misunderstood or misinterpreted that policy, than to imagine that England herself suddenly,

and for no apparent reason, cancelled and abandoned it? This latter hypothesis is obviously fantastic, and with its rejection the whole theory of Mephistophelian duplicity simply falls to the ground.

When viewed in the same light, the story of British opposition to the de Lesseps scheme stands out very differently. It cannot be denied that the British Government did very strongly disapprove of the canal project, and did do its uttermost to strew its path with difficulties. It is with the motives which inspired this strenuous opposition that we are at present concerned.

Is there any reason why the British Government should really have been quite sanguine as to the final success of the scheme? Engineering in these latter days has made giant strides, and we are apt to view as mere child's play the carrying out of works which it would have struck the last generation as sheer folly to attempt. We must remember that physicists of such eminent ability as Arago once scouted even the idea that railway tunnels were at all feasible. The making of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez presented difficulties to which even de Lesseps himself could not afford to shut his eyes. There were physical problems to be solved, to which, beforehand, no confident answer could be given. The English engineers consulted by Palmerston were anything but re-assuring, and we have no reason to suppose that their opinion was intentionally pessimistic.

Apart from all this, the political motives for hindering the Lesseps scheme were the same which we have shown to have throughout inspired British Eastern policy. They were at that moment no less cogent. Napoleon the Third was then at the height of his power. Keen-

witted foretellers of political events had cast his horoscope in the most roseate of colours. Not one of them had an inkling of the great Franco-German convulsion which was soon to vitiate all their calculations; and, had they had such an inkling, they would in all probability, so confident were they of French invincibility, have been little inclined to sinister forebodings.

By a series of political moves (some costing blood, some much diplomatic effort) England had thus far succeeded in scaring away all her dangerous rivals from settling down on the Isthmus of Suez. Was she now, after ridding herself of the first Napoleon, and disposing of Mehemet Ali, to allow another powerful monarch to take their place? The whole labour of seventy years would have been undone; seventy years of incessant strain would have been utterly wasted.

We need, in conclusion, to touch but lightly on the last question—the events of 1882. England has been wildly accused of having, in her own interests and for her own ends, fomented the revolt of Arabi Pasha. On what evidence this accusation rests it is difficult to understand. It will, of course, for generations, and may perhaps be for ever, impossible to lift the diplomatic veil which shrouds the events of the past thirty years. Chancelleries are not inclined to throw open their archives for the delectation of the general public. Even in private, and certainly in commercial life there are little things which will not bear the vulgar gaze. We may approximate to moral ideals of conduct; we can rarely attain them. Were the ambassadorial mail-bags to be opened to-morrow half of Europe would be ablaze before the evening. We cannot, then, expect the British Government, even should it think itself called upon to justify

its proceedings before the eyes of its traducers, to disclose all its secret documents. Such a proceeding would result in little that is profitable; it would certainly fail to silence hostile criticism.

Primâ facie, the whole idea of England having fomented the Arabi affair is highly improbable; and it remains with the accusers to adduce more cogent evidence than has yet been forthcoming before the matter can be regarded in a serious light. We must remember that Seymour's action before Alexandria took place upon the direct invitation and with the explicit consent of France, and that up to that date England never acted without the concurrence of France.

In the rapid survey attempted above we have sought to demonstrate the absurdity underlying the theory that the occupation of Egypt by Great Britain was the outcome of a deep-laid, preconcerted plan. We have shown that it was the then apparently only means of momentarily shelving a problem which had long proved a standing menace to the peace of Europe, and which could find no permanent solution compatible with the vital interests of England. Nobody for a moment imagined that the problem had thus been finally disposed of. Although no fixed and definite period for the continuance of the occupation was assigned, it was fully recognised that that question was bound sooner or later to arise.

It is now our business to indicate in what spirit England carried out the task she had undertaken. It will be very evident that England has not interpreted her *rôle* in any selfish manner, and that the period of British occupation has been one of continually increasing material prosperity. When England first set foot in Egypt she found the finances in a state of absolute

confusion. It looked as if it would be impossible ever to bring order out of such chaos. To-day the finances of Egypt are in as sound a condition as those of any European State. This transformation has not been brought about without years of unremitting and disinterested labour. Rigid economy, but economy of no niggardly description. Pennies have not been saved at the expense of pounds. In matters of this kind figures are the best witnesses, and we quote from the latest edition of the *Statesman's Year Book*, the steps by which the financial reorganisation of Egypt has been realised.

The foreign debt of Egypt began in 1862, when loans amounting to £4,292,800 were issued for the purpose of extinguishing the floating debt. Other issues followed in rapid succession, and in 1870 the amount of foreign loans had increased to £38,307,000. To this was added, in 1873, a loan of £32,000,000 to pay off the floating debt, which had arisen to £28,000,000. In 1875 the Khedive announced that he was in difficulties, and in 1876, acting on French advice, he issued decrees consolidating the debt into one of £91,000,000. In 1876 default took place on several of the loans, and in 1877 arrangements were made by representatives of the English and French bondholders for the consolidation of the debts into a Preference debt of £17,000,000 at 5 per cent. and a Unified debt of £59,000,000 at 7 per cent. The Daira loans were consolidated into the Daira Sanieh debt of £8,815,430 at 5 per cent. In 1878 Domain Mortgage Bonds were issued to the amount of £8,500,000 at 5 per cent., secured on Khedivial property, to be administered by Commissioners. The dual control of England and France began in 1879. In January 1880 two controllers-general reported that Egypt could not possibly meet

her engagements in full, and in July the Liquidation Law, in accordance with the recommendation of an International Commission of the Great Powers, was promulgated. By this Law the Unified debt was reduced to 4 per cent. interest; further conversions were made, and the Unified debt thus increased to £60,958,240. Certain unconsolidated liabilities were added to the Preference debt, which thus rose to £22,743,800; and the Daira Sanieh debt was increased to £9,512,880, the interest being reduced to 4 per cent. In 1885 a loan of £9,424,000 at 3 per cent., guaranteed by the Great Powers, was issued. In 1888 a 4½ per cent. loan of £2,330,800 was contracted for the commutation of pensions. In 1890 the Preference debt and the loan of 1888 (just mentioned) were converted into a 3½ per cent. Preference loan of £29,400,000, including £E1,300,000 for irrigation and commutation of pensions. Also Daira Sanieh 4 per cent. bonds for £7,299,360 were issued for the conversion of the previously existing bonds; and in 1893 State Domain bonds for £8,500,000 at 4¼ per cent. took the place of the 5 per cent. bonds of the same debt. The condition and charge of the various debts in January, 1904, were as follows:—

DEBT.		CHARGE.
	£	£E
Guaranteed loan, 3 per cent. - -	8,077,900	307,125 [1]
Privileged debt, 3½ per cent. - -	31,127,780	1,062,556
Unified debt, 4 per cent. - - -	55,971,960	2,182,906
Daira Sanieh loan, 4 per cent. -	4,952,860	198,114
Domains loan, 4½ per cent. -	2,056,420	107,962
Total -	£102,186,920	£E3,858,663

[1] Including Sinking Fund.

The charges on accounts of debts of all kinds (including tribute), as shown in the estimates for 1905, amount to £E4,593,602.

In 1887 reserve funds were established, the unpledged balances of which, at the beginning of 1904, stood as follows:—

	£E
Economies from conversions - - -	5,507,055
General Reserve Fund - - - -	966,781
Special " " - - - -	1,577,381
Total Reserves -	£E8,051,217

Of British improvements apart from the financial we cannot here go into the details. They are, indeed, so universally recognised that any description of them at length would be superfluous. English enterprise has continued, with brilliant success, the irrigation works, of which the initiative was due to France, and of late the final touch has been set to Egyptian agricultural progress in the construction of the gigantic barrages at Assiut and Assuan. The newspapers have familiarised the public with these magnificent achievements of modern engineering, which bid fair to revolutionise the future of Egypt, and no longer to allow its prosperity to be subject to the caprice of the Nile. Despite the enormous outlay entailed by the work, it was grounded on such an excellent calculation of results that already a considerable portion of the capital has been recovered, and the new dam will certainly not add to the permanent burthen of Egyptian debt.

There could be no more enduring monument of England's goodwill towards Egypt than in this imposing erection, rendered possible by British engineering skill, where other skill had been vainly expended, and carried through by British organisation and British contractors.

PART II

THE GREAT POWERS SEVERALLY CONSIDERED

CHAPTER I

We have thus far discussed the events which led up to the British occupation in 1882. We have dwelt upon the necessities of that occupation, and in so doing justified it as far as it stood in need of justification. The next point which has been dealt with was the nature of the British occupation, and we have shown that it has up till now been highly beneficial to Egypt, in spite of all that has been advanced to the contrary. But if we are to secure a basis which will enable us to discuss with profit the political conjunctures of the present and the political possibilities of the future, we must considerably extend our sphere of investigation. We cannot limit ourselves to the discussion of British influence, for, dominant as that influence may be, the Egyptian question is nevertheless made up of a tangled web of international factors.

Egypt is, and we only borrow the phrase from one who knew Egypt well, *the international* country. As the centre of the Eastern portion of the globe, it has been the meeting-place of races, and, from time immemorial, the prize for which conquerors have

contended. If Egypt is, however, international by geographical position, it has become now-a-days doubly international from the mass of foreign capital which has been sunk in securing its prosperity. Almost every nation in Europe has invested large savings in Egypt, and, consequently, almost every nation in Europe has the keenest individual interest in seeing Egypt thrive and prosper.

If, then, we are to have an insight into the lines along which Egypt should proceed, we cannot afford to neglect these varied interests. We must go deeper and endeavour to find out more precisely what these interests are, and their relative importance. We may then be able to point to some arrangement by which all these diverse interests can be best protected and furthered, and, at the same time, an arrangement by which the permanent happiness of Egypt may be secured.

The problems which agitate European countries are as a rule complicated enough, although they rarely involve the discussion of more than one, two or three opposing interests at most. In Egypt, built up as it is by capital gathered in varying proportions from most of the countries of Europe; harbouring powerful and extensive foreign colonies in its midst, and distracted by the conflict of its many jurisdictions, the problem is rendered infinitely more difficult. It might, indeed, seem almost insoluble, yet we cannot forego the task of taking up every thread of the web; and by analysing each factor in turn we hope to arrive finally at a synthesis.

We have begun by a consideration of British activity in Egypt in the past. We shall now invert the process,

and after gauging the minor interests of other European Powers in Egypt, we shall, in the end, endeavour to form an estimate of what must of necessity be considered the two most important factors—the British and the native.

The first thread which we must endeavour to unravel is that of Turkish influence. Of foreign influence upon Egypt, it certainly ranks next after the British. If we glance at the commercial statistics of Egypt, we are at first astounded to see the long lines of figures constantly following the name of Turkey. Of the interesting details of this commerce we can here say nothing; all we have to do with is its bulk. The annual imports from Turkey into Egypt are not so very far below half the annual imports from the United Kingdom. In 1903 the trade returns show imports from Great Britain somewhat below six millions, and imports from Turkey somewhat below £2,400,000. From no other country does Egypt take goods to a value of more than a million and half. The export trade, on the other hand, to Turkey is relatively small. This large commerce is, no doubt, of great importance, but its importance must nevertheless not be over-estimated. The Turk himself is not a trader born, and he does not take kindly to a mercantile walk in life. Most of this immense trade, it would be found on closer inspection, is little more than Turkish in name. The bulk of the dealings are in the hands of foreign subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The mass of the commerce comes and goes from the cities of the seaboard of Asia Minor, which are for the most part inhabited either by Greeks or Italians, or by Levantine Jews. The Turk himself plays but an inferior *rôle*.

Commercial considerations, therefore, need not detain

us, and with their dismissal we shall be free to devote our attention to the political side of the question, which is by far the more important. We must not, however, entirely shut our eyes to social aspects. To the inhabitants of the West the Turk remains practically unknown. Books occasionally appear which profess to afford a real glimpse into the secrets of Turkish life, and aim at making the European appreciate the ideals by which the Turk is inspired. Hitherto, however, these efforts have been attended with but scant success. Few Europeans have actually lived on terms of close intimacy with the Turk, and the books of Turkish writers themselves lack the knowledge of European life and surroundings which would make their descriptions and comparisons of value. They fail in their portrayals of Turkish life to give us what is genuinely characteristic, and, as a rule, restrict themselves to the delineation of quaint but not very instructive externals. The tide of anti-Turkish prejudice still runs high throughout the West. The generality of Europeans are unable to grasp the wide gulf which severs the Turk as a political being from the Turk as a social being. The few people who have come into actual contact with the Turk in private life and have experienced his unfailing courtesy, his unfailing tact, and have really found that the Turk is the gentleman of the East, have failed to stem to any perceptible extent the stream of popular dislike and suspicion which marks the West as a whole. In Egypt the Turk remains an exceedingly important social factor. He has a multitude of friends; it must be admitted a far greater multitude since his fall from power.

It must also never be forgotten that Mahometan Egypt is bound by puissant religious ties to the Sultan, as

Khalif, as Defender of the Faithful, and that the Sultan still has the appointment of the important office of the Grand Kadi. Above all, it must be remembered that the Khedive is not only appointed and invested with the dignity of Ruler of Egypt, but that the constitution of that country is practically defined by the Sultan.

The present relation between Turkey and Egypt does not contain within itself the seeds of long duration. That such an anomalous—one might with little exaggeration say absurd—condition of affairs should have thus far maintained itself seems almost incredible ; that it should persist much longer cannot be possible. We have no exact parallel to the suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt, and we cannot see why, unless maintained in obedience by the Powers, Egypt should continue to drain her resources for the benefit of Turkey, which gives nothing in return. That it should long be in the interest of the Powers to enforce obedience upon Egypt is also unlikely. We shall be compelled to cast a short glimpse over the whole Near Eastern Question, and we shall see that the Powers are, in the long run, more likely to wish to curtail rather than increase the resources of the Sublime Porte.

Admitting, then, that the present anomalous indefinite relation must inevitably and automatically terminate, in what direction can it be altered ? There are, as far as it is possible to see, but two alternatives: either Egypt must return to complete subjection and re-assume the position which she occupied previously to 1811, that is, she must again become an Ottoman province ; or else the whole of the present shadowy vassalage must disappear, and Egypt must become entirely free from all Turkish claims.

The former alternative hardly calls for discussion. It is obvious that Egypt could only be brought to re-assume the Turkish yoke by force of arms. There is no possibility of Turkey re-asserting her rights. Egypt is geographically insulated, and beyond the reach of Turkish arms. For the last thirty years Turkey has not shown the slightest intention of making a hostile movement; the Ottoman Government must be keenly alive to the fact that Egypt's situation secures her from their attacks. Turkey without a fleet cannot dominate either the Mediterranean or the Red Sea, and it is only by water that Egypt is accessible. In the rear Egypt is protected by the strong bulwark of the British Soudan.

One question alone remains. Is it in the political interest of Europe to maintain the present phantom of Turkish suzerainty? The answer to this question entails a brief survey of the whole present condition of Near Eastern affairs.

Again we must remind the reader that the only true guide in international affairs lies in the correct knowledge of the respective interests of the various parties concerned. The present attitude of the mass of European Powers towards Turkey will be considered regrettable or not regrettable according to the particular feelings and leanings of the individual reader, but that attitude is at all events not ambiguous. It is impossible to misinterpret the trend of affairs, and it needs no very piercing eye to see through the open secret of the Chancelleries of Europe. The occupant of the Yildiz Kiosque has long been known as the sick man of Europe. For some time the Powers undoubtedly played the part of well-meaning physicians. They have long despaired

of their patient's recovery, and probably few would now care to see him rally. We have nothing to say as to the justice or injustice of the case, but it is too clear that Europe as a whole has decided that sooner or later the Turk must go. By skilful amputations his European limbs have been lopped away one by one. Their names are Servia, Roumania, Bulgaria; and the Powers appear to be sharpening their instruments for yet another operation. The amputation of Macedonia will not long be deferred.

The European question is comparatively simple; but if the Turk is eventually expelled from Europe, there still remain his broad Asiatic domains. The European operations have brought little material advantage to the surgeons, and they undoubtedly look to recoup themselves in Asia. There seems every prospect of their disagreeing among themselves. Each Power would undoubtedly be delighted to secure the whole spoil of Turkey, but seeing that to be impossible, they do not quite see how to proceed to a partition. Each is too avaricious to accept his proper share, and by prolonging the agony each hopes better to secure his own advantage. They would all willingly combine to oust one of themselves; and all know that if Egypt could be set aside the sharing out would be considerably simplified. The conquest of Asia Minor is the affair of large armies; the conquest of Egypt would certainly require a fleet. It follows that the Power which would most easily be divested of a share in the proceedings would be England, and England would also be excluded by the previous disposal of Egypt. The French have their eye upon Syria, where their influence has throughout been predominant, and has been greatly fostered by

their right of protection of the Catholics in that country. The Papal power of relieving France of that right has long been recognised as the trump card of the Pope in the present struggle between the Vatican and France. Germany has already acquired considerable influence in the valley of the Euphrates by the Bagdad railway scheme. Russia claims already to have absorbed the better half of Persia, and is ready to carve out a slice to the East. Remains Arabia as a bone of contention—Arabia, the country whose interior is still so little known; Arabia, the country of indefinite possibilities. Austria will probably be satisfied with the occupation of Saloniki and the acquisition of the Ægean seaboard, towards which she has stretched expansive feelers, which already reach Novi Bazar.

But all these semi-prophecies may perchance turn out a little premature. It may perhaps be found that the European surgeons have calculated a little too much without their patient, and in that case the dismemberment may be indefinitely postponed. The partition of Turkey may be a matter of the near future; it may not take place for centuries to come.

Meanwhile it is to the obvious interest of all the Powers to narrow down the final discussion by the preliminary settlement of the Egyptian problem. Just as the question of the division of European Turkey has been gradually restricted by the formation of the independent Balkan principalities, so the problem of the projected dismemberment of Asiatic Turkey may be simplified by first severing the Egyptian province once and for all from all trace of Turkish overlordship.

Should things progress along the line which they are

so far following, we may then consider Turkish influence in Egypt as a vanishing quantity.

What we have said in dealing with Turkey will furnish us with very material aid when we proceed to show the possible attitude which Austria-Hungary may assume towards the future development of the Egyptian Question. The trade returns give us indications of a very considerable commerce between Austria and Egypt, and this commerce shows signs of healthy expansion. There is, moreover, in Egypt a relatively large number of Austrian settlers, considerably more Austrians having made their home in Egypt than, for instance, Germans. We may, however, for the moment dismiss these commercial considerations, which only occupy a second rank as compared with politics proper.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable, interesting and important features of Austrian foreign policy up to the present has been its attitude of constant friendliness towards England, with whom Austria has almost without exception endeavoured to act in conjunction. This sympathy has been as sedulously cultivated at Vienna as it has been fostered in England by *The Times* and other leading newspapers. It has now lasted unbroken since 1840, and has no doubt on the whole been the right policy for Austria. We cannot here, for evident reasons, go into the origins of this informal alliance, or explain its general causes. We must, however, look into its prospects of prolonged duration, since the combined action of England and Austria considerably modify the Egyptian Question.

It is impossible to see that Austria can in the future reap any very substantial material profit from the English alliance, especially in Egypt. What, then, are

the prospects of England and Austria acting in common accord in the Turkish problem? For on the Turkish Question, and the manner in which it is viewed by the various Powers, we have shown the question of Egypt to depend to a large extent.

We must first of all have a very definite idea of the advantage which Austria intends to derive from the Turkish dismemberment. Ever since her defeat in 1866 Austria must have seen that her hopes of expansion beyond the Inn, in German territory, were finally extinguished. Italy may be regarded as destined henceforward to be Italian, and at her expense Austria can no longer look for territorial development. Excluded from the western side of the Adriatic, Austria has spread over the eastern Adriatic, realising that her one chance of imperial and commercial expansion lay in the Balkans. This policy, clearly dictated by the reverses of 1866, received as it were its international legalisation by the Congress of 1878, by which Austrian policy was approved and forwarded by a mandate permitting her to possess herself of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russian policy in the Balkans is largely based on sentimental motives or upon tradition, and we shall see in the following pages, when we come to deal with Russia separately, that Russian interest in the Balkans has long been diminishing, and will continue to diminish. Austria's advance is prompted, as we have seen, by far more substantial motives; her political and territorial conquests will only cover the ground which she has already infiltrated with her commerce.

At the present day Austria is the predominant Power in the Balkans, where she cannot seriously be opposed by Servia and Roumania, of which States the latter, at all events, inclines rather towards her,

and shows itself cool and aloof in its dealings with Russia.

It must be recognised that England may eventually have substantial reasons for thwarting Austrian plans of aggrandisement. There is no reason to cast the slightest suspicion upon the candour of the English friendship, or to suspect England of the premeditated intention of playing false to Austria; but it may simply, upon the ground of enlightened interests, which in the end invariably lead to sound political conclusions—it may, we say, be in the interest of England to act against Austria. The Sublime Porte will not resign itself to being stripped of its last shreds of European dominion without a murmur, and will be happy if, at any cost, it can produce dissension in the camp of its foes. It is a line of policy which it has pursued in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, when the neutrality of England was secured by the cession of Cyprus. Who knows but what the Porte may find some other morsel with which to pay for an armed, or at least diplomatic intercession, which might save Saloniki from falling into the hands of Austria. Turkey might even bring herself to yield up to England the rights of sovereignty in Egypt. It is, therefore, very obviously in the interest of Austria to bring about the preliminary settlement of the Egyptian Question, which might in the end prove fatal to all her designs.

It has for generations been the custom to regard Russia as the dominant Power of the Near East, and the custom has become a second nature, so that despite sign upon sign which has been given that Russia's pre-eminence in the Balkan peninsula, so far as it was ever a reality, has long been on the wane, nevertheless people

cling to the old idea, and whenever there is the slightest show of unrest in the south-eastern corner of Europe, Russia is invariably reputed to be the prime mover—Russia the Power to be guarded against and to be feared. The events of the last few months might have been expected to open any but wilfully-closed eyes. The direction in which Russian power really gravitates is too clear, and any reverses which Russia may suffer on the Pacific coast will only strengthen her resolve to win, cost what it will, free access to the sea from Vladivostok to Port Arthur. Perhaps it is still too early to risk a prophecy as to the final outcome of the Russo-Japanese war, but whatever that outcome may be, it cannot fail to keep Russia's eyes averted from Constantinople. Let us for a moment assume the hypothesis of Russian victory over Japan—albeit such a hypothesis may at present appear rather difficult—Russia can, nevertheless, obtain no such crushing superiority as to ensure her any long interval of repose. Should the Japanese be eventually compelled to withdraw from the mainland, they would still remain a formidable and constantly menacing foe, able at any moment, when they found Russia involved in European complications, to rekindle war in the Far East, to descend anywhere along the Siberian, Corean or Manchurian coast and recoup themselves for their (hypothetical) defeat.

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that the Japanese are able to prosecute yet further the success of their first campaign, and that Russia is driven back from the Pacific coast. We cannot for an instant suppose that such a reverse would cause her to abandon the policy of centuries, even were it possible for her to abandon that policy. Russia cannot, however, afford to set any limit,

save a sea-limit, to her Eastern dominions. Towards that sea-limit she has been struggling laboriously but persistently ever since the days of Ivan the Terrible (the sixteenth century), and upon its ultimate acquisition depends her very existence. Defeat can only brace her to renewed, better-prepared and more cautious advance. To this end all her resources will be drained. Russia has so far proceeded in her expansion along the lines of least resistance. Her repeated advances towards Constantinople were invariably checked, breaking helplessly, even when, after long fighting, the Turk was overcome, against the solid bulwark of the banded Powers of Europe. It has always been in the united interest of Europe to stave Russia from Constantinople, and against the general opposition of Europe Russia cannot contend single-handed and alone. The resistance which she has encountered near home has only served to strengthen her Eastward expansion.

There are yet other reasons which screen Constantinople from the Muscovite. Russia, no doubt, intends to have her share in the Turkish quarry, but she is approaching her prey as usual along the line of minimum resistance. Russia no longer needs to march over Constantinople to the dismemberment of Turkey, for by the acquisition of the Caucasian peninsula and her consequent predominance over Persia, she has outflanked the Turkish position, which now lies open to her along the whole line of Mesopotamia. It is here that Russia may be expected to set up her claim; further West she cannot extend without coming into unfriendly collision with the Syrian interests of her French ally. It will be centuries before Russia can afford once more to cross the path of France. France holds the only purse in

Europe whose strings have been, and may again be, liberally untied to meet the needs of Russia. Russia, though she may herself find the blood to effect new conquests, cannot find in her own pocket the gold which is to make them fertile. France, then, by the closest ties of interest limits Russian designs to Asia Minor, while the whole of Europe limits Russia's designs in the Balkans. Russia, unless compelled by some quite unforeseen event, is not likely to fight again in south-east Europe in order to see the fruits of victory withdrawn from her, Tantalus-like, by the concert of European Powers. We may, then, prophesy with a very fair degree of confidence that Russia will restrict her ambitions to the securing of Mesopotamia, and that she will thus have very much the same interests, which we have shown Austria to have, in limiting the Near Eastern Question, as far as possible, by the exclusion of Egypt.

It has not escaped the reader's attention that in matters of international politics a direct interest in a question is not always requisite to its being espoused with a considerable degree of warmth. This statement may seem somewhat paradoxical, but a moment's reflection will suffice to convince of its truth. When diplomacy is not backed by the immediate possibility of an appeal to arms, that is to say, when parties are so evenly and nicely balanced that war is too dangerous a means of obtaining minor advantages, the contending parties very frequently attempt to play a game of what we may call *ricochet* politics. We will at once take a concrete example which will make our meaning clearer. Let us consider, for instance, what were the interests of Germany in the years immediately preceding the Franco-German War. The principal aim of her entire

diplomacy was to secure the complete isolation of France, and when we reflect upon the geographical position of Germany, it becomes apparent, that it was above all important for her to secure herself in the rear by making certain of the neutrality of Russia. Had Russia manifested any intention of coming to the assistance of France, the whole plan of German campaign would have been upset. The result of a war with France would almost certainly have been fatal to Germany, or at all events would have been terribly jeopardised. It is quite obvious that before 1870, when German plans of external aggrandisement were not even in their infancy, the Black Sea can have had no real interest for Germany; and yet, just about this period we discover Germany manifesting the most anxious concern about the Black Sea, and especially about that one tender point—whether it should remain open or closed for Russia. It was an interest which, as a signatory of the Paris Treaty of 1856, she might very well display dutifully and rightly. But a little more than a strict sense of duty translated itself in her present concern. Russia had long been secretly feeling the ground, endeavouring to discover whether Germany seriously meant, if occasion should arise, to assist in maintaining the anti-Russian document of 1856. Germany had not been willing to throw down her cards, and disclose her game. On the contrary, she had carefully kept the 1856 Treaty, and now played it as a trump, and by notifying Russia that she was not particularly concerned as to whether the Black Sea remained shut or no, assured the grateful neutrality of Russia, and consequently a free hand in dealing with France. We might give many other instances, and we

might account thus for the inordinate interest shown by Powers which cannot be directly concerned in the maintenance of the Dardanelles Convention.

This digression will be pardoned as being meant as a reminder to the reader of a very important phase of the game of politics. It will satisfy him that it is not always sufficient to regard the direct interests at stake in a question. We must, as a rule, probe somewhat deeper.

We have shown that direct interest in maintaining the present anomalous position of Egypt Russia has none. It remains for us to see whether she can at any time use this position as an asset in a *ricochet* diplomatic move. Can she thus have an indirect interest in maintaining the *status quo* of Egypt? The question may readily be answered in the negative. We have shown how very simple are the objectives of Russian policy. As her share in Turkey she will be amply satisfied with Mesopotamia, and from taking Mesopotamia, when the opportune conjuncture arrives, no earthly power can restrain her. With Great Britain there is no complication, even on the remote horizon, in which Russia might find it useful to throw her reputed Egyptian interests as a sop. To Great Britain Russia has no concession to make. We see, then, that Russia has no motive, direct or indirect, for keeping the Egyptian Question any longer in suspense, and Russia would consequently go to no sacrifice in order to retain Egypt in the Near Eastern problem.

To come, then, to the discussion of Germany as a factor in Egypt's future. Germany can no longer be treated with the scant consideration of pre-Bismarckian days. Her progress has been rapid, and she figures to-day in the forefront of the Great Powers. Her commercial activity

is universally recognised and generally felt, and her pretentions to become a World Power cannot be denied. One striking set of figures gives an irrefutable indication of her growing importance in the East. If we take the returns of the Suez Canal we shall find that in the early years British ships and British cargoes accounted for some four-fifths of the annual receipts. During the last few years, though the British traffic has gone on healthily increasing, its percentage as compared with the whole has rapidly declined. While former years give 77 per cent. of the receipts as British, in 1900 the receipts from British ships had sunk already to 57 per cent., and on looking closer it will be found that this fall of 20 per cent. is mainly due to the astounding rise of German shipping. The number of German vessels now passing yearly through the Canal stands second only to the number of English ships. This at once shows that Germany has a just claim to participate in all matters in any wise affecting Oriental commerce.

But commercial considerations account only in a minor degree for German interest in the politics of the Levant. It is as a rapidly-expanding nation, bound somewhere to find an outlet for overflowing energy and overcrowded population, that Germany is most important. In considering Germany's foreign policy we may the more confidently leave out the thought of all extraneous actuating motives, since German statesmen have themselves long and loud proclaimed that they are influenced by Germany's *interests* alone. They have throughout adhered to the unequivocal declaration of Bismarck: "*Wir machen keine moralische Eroberungen.*" The direct point upon which German energies are concentrated has long been an open secret. For years

they have been endeavouring to Germanise Asia Minor with the same thoroughness with which we have shown France to have formerly Frenchified Egypt. German money has been poured out lavishly in the furtherance of grandiose railway schemes, and Germany has fostered the spread of German research and German archæology throughout Asia Minor. Her archæological expeditions, which centre especially about this region (the name of Schliemann is universally famous), are but another sign of her keen interest in the country. Many of these expeditions have become permanently fixed institutions in the land. Thus far Germany has proceeded along precisely similar lines to those followed by France, but whereas France probably finally abandoned all idea of annexing Egypt, after the failure of the Napoleonic attempt in 1798-9 had demonstrated the inadvisability and inexpedience of such a scheme, Germany, on the other hand, clearly meditates more than the advantageous placing of her superfluous capital or the philanthropic spread of her civilisation. She undoubtedly intends, sooner or later, to gain a firm and lasting footing on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean—a footing which, if possible, shall reach as far as the Persian Gulf.

If she can attain her ultimate object along peaceful channels Germany will, of course, be delighted. She has no wish to launch into a war which might set the whole of Europe ablaze, and at the same time eventually prove ruinous to herself. But the maintenance of a peaceful course means the conciliation of Powers possibly opposed to herself.

There are, however, two sides from which Germany may approach Asia Minor, and of these we will first

discuss the first, in which we will candidly confess our disbelief. It has, however, been made the subject of so much serious writing and debate, and has won so many adherents, that we cannot afford to neglect it. It involves a belief in what is commonly known as Pan-Germanism. A school of political theorists has propagated the idea of the approaching dissolution of the Austrian Empire. It is then advanced that the German Empire will absorb into its body at least the German-speaking portion of the Austrian Empire, and some of the peoples of other speech who may care to join the *Bund*. The whole theory teems with inherent difficulties, of which we can only briefly indicate a few. Nothing seriously points towards the impending dissolution of the Austrian Empire, and should such a dissolution really take place, there is nothing to incline us to believe that Germany would be remarkably delighted at the event. The idea of absorbing Austria has again and again been declared contrary to the true interests of Germany by many of her foremost statesmen, including Bismarck. Germany has already the utmost difficulty in dealing with its Catholic population, and has no wish to make the Catholic party preponderant in the Reichstag—a result which would almost inevitably ensue upon the absorption of twelve million Austrian Catholics. Germany would likewise have to face the difficult problem of the Magyars. It is the height of unlikelihood that these latter would be brought into the union by peaceable means, and should they be finally constrained to join it by the overwhelming power of Germany, they would form an even more perilous element in the Empire than do the Poles at the present day.

Apart from all these questions of what we may call internal repulsion and desire, it is improbable that the rest of Europe would with calm equanimity allow the building up of so vast a central European union, which, when once consolidated, might dictate its will and enforce its behests without the possibility of resistance.

Should Germany, according to this at least improbable theory, succeed in absorbing Austria, she would, of course, step into the place of Austria in the Balkans. She would probably abandon diplomatic methods, for which there would no longer be need, and at once push forward her frontier to the coveted Saloniki, whence the occupation of Asia Minor would present no formidable difficulties.

We have, however, shown the inherent unlikelihood of the fulfilment of these grandiose Pan-Germanic dreams, and with this we may dismiss them from considerations of practical politics. We have only referred to them here since they have excited considerable interest upon the Continent, where several serious books have been written in support of them. We need only mention the well-known work of Chéradame.

We are much more seriously concerned with Germany's attempts to establish herself in Asia Minor by diplomatic means, since this is undoubtedly the ideal on which the German Foreign Office has hitherto constructed its schemes, and it is by keeping this ideal in view that we shall most readily be able to estimate the interest of Germany in the Egyptian Question. The direct interest of Germany in Egypt is not so great as to cause her to show any great anxiety as to Egypt's ultimate destiny, so long as the security of Germany's comparatively small investments is assured. The growth

of Germany's traffic through the Suez Canal, to which we have already had reason to refer, has not materially influenced her attitude. In time of peace it is the interest of all parties to further and facilitate that traffic, and in time of war, despite all conventions to the contrary, the strongest of the belligerents will probably be able to close the Canal to the weaker.

It is as an indirect diplomatic asset that Germany will continue to keep up her interest in Egyptian affairs. And in this sense it might very well be advanced that it is part of her policy to maintain the *status quo.* She very probably contemplates the possibility of securing a foothold in Asia Minor after much the same fashion that Great Britain has won a foothold in Egypt, though with Germany there could be no doubt as to the intention of ultimately converting the foothold into a permanent and durable occupation. It is, then, not to be looked for that Germany should seek in any way to discredit the British position, which she may very likely be glad to use as a precedent.

It must, moreover, be kept well in mind that the only Power from which Germany is likely to encounter serious opposition is Great Britain. We are constantly being alarmed, it is true, by rumours of war or reports of over-strained relations between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin. These reports are rarely more than the gloomy vaticinations of a press ravenous of sensation so long as it is plausible. We have already endeavoured to show the Eastward drift of Russian policy, which alone is sufficient guarantee of peace with Germany. But there seems little doubt that peace between Russia and Germany is one of the firm though unwritten principles about which the policies of both

countries turn. Every cause of friction appears to be studiously avoided, and should accidentally any momentary disagreeable difference arise, it is quickly extinguished by both parties. Germany and Russia have much in common, and no mutually irreconcilable projects. Both suffer like afflictions. Both are gnawed on their frontier with Polish disease; and each would readily give aid in checking the other's malady. They have been upon a solid if undemonstrative understanding ever since 1762, and although since that date it would be difficult to find a pair of European Powers who have not come to loggerheads, not to say blows, yet the Russo-German calm has throughout remained unruffled. It is unlikely that it will now or in future be disturbed.

There remains, as we have said, the possible opposition of England to Germany's schemes in Asia Minor, and for this reason Germany may be very glad to retain the means of at least diplomatically tying England's hand. While England remains in Egypt she can make but a half-hearted protest to Germany making a second Egypt out of Asia Minor, including, perhaps, the Euphrates valley.

But Germany's policy is now wavering in the balance. All we know is that she is sensitive of the imperious necessity of finding some field of colonial expansion; where that field of expansion is to be, we cannot be so sure. The events of the past few months may perhaps be found to have revolutionised the kaleidoscope of Eastern affairs.

It is impossible to formulate anything direct about this new Eastern policy. Meanwhile the observant student of international politics cannot but notice a new current in German foreign policy. Outside of Germany itself little is known, or at least very little has been

noticed of the very remarkable progress which has been made by her in Morocco, especially during the past decade; but during that period German interests in the north-west corner of the African continent have been steadily increasing.[1] The German has been moving with that slow, persevering, not always brilliant, thoroughness which he brings to bear in all that he does with a will. There is very little fuss, but creeping, undeviating advance, which in the end succeeds. As usual the German gives strong outward symptoms of his interest, and this he does in books. The rise of German interest in any subject may generally be fairly accurately measured by the corresponding flood of literature with which it is immediately surrounded. An observer of mere externals might very well form an idea of Germany's passionate desire to become a naval power of the first order from the long lists of books appearing in the publishers' annuals, and having only to do with subjects of marine, naval armament, navigation, etc., etc., and a mass of other literature directly reflecting on Germany's naval aspirations. In the same manner we might glean a fairly correct notion of the intensity of Germany's interest in Morocco from the extent of the literature immediately concerned with Morocco which has issued from German presses during the past few years. In Germany the reading public and the general public are almost co-extensive. The possibilities of Morocco have been minutely studied. The country has been mapped and explored in every direction. Military men have been there and have published their opinions as to the possibility of France successfully invading Morocco.

[1] The following remarks were written before the recent troubles in Morocco, fully confirming the view of the text

The total commercial movement of Morocco in 1902 was seventy-six million marks, little less than four million pounds, of which Germany's portion was very considerable. In 1902 Germany sent 292 vessels with 252,211 registered tons; France sent 311 vessels with only 202,778 tons.

The resident European commercial houses in Morocco are 61, of which 23 are German, 16 British, 10 Spanish, 7 French. On the 11th October, 1902, a "Morocco Company" (*Marokkanische Gesellschaft*) was founded, of which *Nord Afrika* is the periodical organ. The number of separate works written by the Germans for the commercial and even political exploitation of Morocco is most significant. The reader will easily make his own conclusions.

CHAPTER II

CONTINUATION: FRANCE AND ITALY

NEXT to Great Britain, France has always been regarded, and very correctly regarded, as being by far the most important factor in the future of Egypt. But the attitude of France, which has been defended and opposed, and criticised from every possible point of view, in books innumerable, in half the languages of Europe, has been almost invariably misconstrued. This fact is all the more astonishing when we consider that in the position which France has taken up towards Egyptian affairs she has in nowise deviated from her traditional policy. Among the number of writers on Egypt figure the names of not a few eminent politicians, to whose opinion one naturally listens with deferential attention; but when they come to speak of France they are, or have up to the present been, almost without exception completely mistaken. Their liability to fall into error has been no doubt induced to no small degree by the narrow view which they have taken of French politics as a whole, or rather should we say by their restricted knowledge of the historical policy of France as an unbroken continuity. When dealing with questions which involve the foreign policy of a great European Power, it is exceedingly unsafe to base our judgments on what we may consider to be the particular interests of

that Power for the moment. We shall almost invariably discover that the foreign policy of great countries, much as it may be modified by individual statesmen of genius, is in the main controlled by influences which are removed beyond their control. Brilliant politicians have been able to use to the utmost the opportunities which have been offered them; they have seldom, if ever, been in a position to create those opportunities. We shall shortly proceed to point the moral and prove the truth of what might otherwise run the risk of passing for a rather dogmatical statement.

It is not needful for us to pile together quotations illustrating the general attitude which has so far been supposed to have existed between England and France with regard to matters Egyptian. The view expressed by English writers has certainly not been a charitable one. France has throughout been depicted as afflicted with a rather angry jealousy of British progress. In regard to Egypt especially she has been credited with bitter heartburnings. She is supposed to have had opportunities in Egypt by which she neglected to profit, and to be vexed at seeing those opportunities turned to better account by another. Alarmists would have liked to have it believed that she did not stop there, but that she cherished sinister designs waiting for a favourable day. Wait, the alarmists say, until England finds herself pressed by adversity, or with her forces fully occupied elsewhere, then you will see France in her true colours. Such as were not quite so alarmist gave it at least to be clearly understood that France would always have something disagreeable to say, some fault to find, something at which to cavil in the British management of affairs at Cairo. It is happily not our business to

show the fallacy of all those gloomy but fortunately groundless forebodings; circumstances have done so amply enough. England has found herself involved in expense, and with her energies fully taxed, but France, so far from disclosing a hostile policy, has done everything in her power to free England's hands.

What, then, was it that gave plausibility to these disturbing prophecies? For we cannot believe people to have been so credulous as to believe them without some solid ground. The great mistake has arisen from crediting France with imperial desires of the same pattern as those cherished by England. The error is a common one, and it involves an entire misconstruction of French history, we might even say of Continental history as a whole. France has no wish to become the counterpart of England, no doubt because she has long realised that such a *rôle* is thoroughly irreconcilable with her position as a Continental Power. It cannot be seriously maintained that she ever had any real thought of annexing Egypt. It may be taken as an axiom of French policy that she will never seriously endeavour to make imperial conquests at great cost of men and money. Certainly she will make no distant conquests. We have already hinted in preceding pages at the internal difficulties which preclude Continental Powers of to-day (we shall indicate one or two rare exceptions) from building up dreams of distant oversea dominions. That France has thoroughly realised the futility of such dreams we cannot for a moment doubt. Few countries have had such magnificent colonial prospects, few so unconcernedly, or perhaps ruthlessly, sacrificed them to home necessities. The life of nations is much like the life of men. If the household is torn within and

threatened without, the man cannot venture to embark on fair schemes far from home. Even so it is with France. We need only remember the French dominions in Canada, which were ceded to England, it is true, as the price of a disastrous war, yet, when they were still French, not an energetic move was made to save them, not a man was sent to relieve Montcalm, who was vainly struggling against overwhelming odds. France has had its great sailors and its empire-builders, but most have died broken-hearted at the pitiless way in which their life-work has been immolated in the interests at home. We mention, not to multiply instances, the French cessions in 1783. Little is told in history books of the campaigns of the *Bailli de Suffren*, and of his brilliant naval genius, which made him in very little time master of the Carnatic, in spite of desperate attempts of the British to break his advance. But scarcely was the French Admiral sure of his success when dispatches arrived for him from Paris with orders to evacuate all his conquests forthwith, as they had already been restored by treaty to the English. There was nothing left for him but to obey, and with him departed the last tatter of the French Empire in India dreamt of by Dupleix.

It is only upon the conquest of countries near home, which are either a necessity to her own existence or else so near home as to be a field for colonisation and at the same time a cause of strength rather than a weakness in case of France herself being attacked; it is only upon conquests such as these that the French have brought their full energy and perseverance to bear. The occupation of Corsica was to the French a matter of prime necessity. It was impossible to leave an island which

commanded the whole southern littoral of France, which would render the blockade of all her Mediterranean ports easy in order that it might be eventually turned into a second Gibraltar or Malta by the English. Although Corsica was formally acquired by purchase from the Genoese, it required years of persistent and embittered fighting before the inhabitants could be turned into Frenchmen.

The other great imperial possession of France is Algeria, only a few hours' sail from Toulon, and which, despite the vigorous efforts which it cost to conquer, has since proved a valuable asset and a source of military strength, for from Algeria France has been able to call Zouave troops to her aid.

In another portion of this work we have already spoken at length of the internal problems and drawbacks which have prohibited the great Continental nations from launching upon an imperial career, and we have shown how the absence of these hindrances has reduced English imperial policy to a comparatively simple matter in which success is practically a foregone conclusion. We have emphasised these views at considerable length, since in estimating the attitude assumed by the Continental nations we shall possibly arrive at very false conclusions if we constantly regard them as rivals of Great Britain for colonial empire—bitter experience has convinced them of the impossibility of such rivalry except at the utmost risk of their whole political existence. If we bear facts in mind, we shall be less astonished at noticing that it is the minor Powers of Europe, apart from England, which have been most successful in piecing together and retaining wide oversea dominions. We might at first not unnaturally be very

surprised at finding that while the vast German Empire has great difficulty in maintaining its rule over comparatively small African territories, a small power like Portugal is able to keep its holding in Africa, proportionately a far larger one, with relative ease and security. The Germans find themselves taxed to the utmost in suppressing a temporary revolt such as that of the Herreros, while the Dutch are able to keep a strong hold upon such possessions as Acheen, where her subjects are in a perennial state of insubordination—but Holland has long ceased to be troubled by Home difficulties. The act of neutralisation has made her as complete a political island as England is a geographical one, her resources may not be very enormous but they stand at her absolute disposal, she can concentrate all her forces upon her weak point, while Germany cannot afford to ship any large expedition over sea. Germany cannot overwhelm the Herreros by the dispatch of an army of crushing power.

Portugal too stands in a very similar case. The safe neutrality of Spain relieves her from all anxiety lest she should be assailed unawares in the rear. Her internal condition is tranquil, and consequently with no menace within and with no menace without, she is in a position to lavish her entire undivided energies upon the fulfilment of her colonial ideals.

When we sum up these manifold facts we cannot fail to be convinced that a country like France, with immense frontiers open to instant attack should they be for an instant less vigilantly guarded; with potential foes at every point of the compass, and with latent causes of division within, catholic church and divided politics; a country thus in imminent and daily peril from within

and from without, will not quintuple her risks by grasping at far-away dominions. Should she acquire territories abroad at little cost and so docile as to require no sustained and expensive efforts for their retention, France will take them and keep them so long as these conditions remain unaltered. And such, upon inspection, French Colonies at present will be found to be. Tonkin with its seven million of inhabitants has not as many thousand French colonials. We may imagine what a chance they would have, should the native population prove less acquiescent. In the immense Central African dominions, spread measureless on every side, but a few hundreds of French soldiers suffice to secure semi-obedience. Probably few of the inhabitants have ever been vouchsafed the pleasure of contemplating a Frenchman in flesh and blood.

Such being the case, we must, in estimating French diplomacy, dismiss the very common notion that its moves and counter-moves are inspired by measureless but unsated projects of imperial domination. A false evaluation of the opponent's aims is very likely to lead to diplomatic defeat. Above all must Egypt dismiss the fond idea that France was ever likely to act forcibly in the vindication of Egyptian rights. Should Egypt have been wrongly occupied by Great Britain and against the native will, the Egyptians could never have looked for salvation from France. If France had neither the power nor the desire to expend her forces in winning Egypt for herself, she was not likely to pour out her resources and expose herself to complete undoing for the philanthropic and unadvantageous furtherance of Egyptian liberties.

If Egyptians have seen the light of their hopes in

France, they have deluded themselves, and to-day that sun has irrevocably set. And yet they have no reason to despair, for if their hopes are for national autonomy, those hopes, as we shall make it our business to show, are no darker to-day than they were before. All we have pointed out, is that if those hopes were placed in France they were wrongly located. The days when nations as a whole acted from quixotic motives have long gone by, if indeed they ever existed. To-day, interest reigns supreme. Should Egypt become an independent national unity, it will be because such an independence most readily combines the interests of all parties concerned. She will never become so by the quixotic but impolitic action of a Great Power.

To return once more to France and French interests in Egypt. When viewed in the light of what has gone before, French policy assumes a definite shape and form, and an appositeness which shows it not to be inspired by the chicken-hearted retrogressive spirit imputed to it in the declamations of the French nationalist press.

A little reflection on the Imperial policy of France in the past can then hardly fail to convince the reader of the untenability of any notion of France harbouring imperial designs towards Egypt. We shall presently see that France has still room for imperial expansion at her very doors; that she should ever risk anything in order to occupy Egypt was at all times highly unlikely.

At this moment we possess ample confirmation of this view in the shape of the latest convention between England and France (April 8th, 1904). All that is required is to interpret that treaty in the right light. We may rightly consider it as another bright sign of the *entente cordiale* at present existing between the two

countries, but it would be childish to imagine that it is directly produced by that understanding. Neither is it the immediate fruit of the tactful diplomacy by which King Edward VII, with that keen insight which he has throughout shown into the true needs of British policy, has been cementing the bonds of amity with France. The treaty can only have been made by France with a long knowledge of what her real position with regard to Egypt should be. Although she formally hereby disclaims all intention of interfering in any way with the progress of Great Britain in Egypt, she does not in reality renounce any part of her previous policy. She merely makes an open avowal of what has throughout been her line of conduct, at the same time securing a fuller freedom in the prosecution of her imperial plans in the north-west of Africa. Whether France in making this avowal has not secured very solid advantages in exchange for not very much, we shall later have occasion to see. It must, however, be here recognised that France most unequivocally abandons any imperial designs as far as Egypt is concerned. We quote the terms of the treaty itself.

ARTICLE I.

"Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique déclare qu'il n'a pas l'intention de changer l'état politique de l'Égypte.

"De son côté le Gouvernement de la République française déclare qu'il n'entravera pas l'action de l'Angleterre dans ce pays en demandant qu'un terme soit fixé à l'occupation Britannique ou de toute autre manière, et qu'il donne son adhésion au projet du décret Khédivial qui est annexé au présent arrangement, qui contient les garanties jugées nécessaires pour la sauvegarde des

intérêts des porteurs de la Dette Égyptienne, mais à la condition qu'après sa mise en vigueur aucune modification n'y pourra être introduite sans l'assentiment des Puissances Signataires de la Convention de Londres de 1885."

["His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Egypt.

"The Government of the French Republic, for their part, declare that they will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country by asking that a limit of time be fixed, or in any other manner, and that they give their assent to the draft Khedivial decree, annexed to the present Arrangement, containing the Guarantees considered necessary for the protection of the interests of the Egyptian bondholders, on the condition that, after its promulgation it can not be modified in any way without the consent of the Powers Signatory of the Convention of London of 1885."]

The present foreign policy of France may, after what we have seen, be briefly resumed as a policy of contraction. Her statesmen have apparently clearly grasped that France has no imperial vocation like that pursued by England. If in their dreams of far-off conquest they meet with any strong tide of opposition or resistance, they prefer to withdraw rather than to launch into renewed effort and expense. France, moreover, is not impelled like other Continental countries to embark upon wide schemes of colonisation in order to relieve the pressure of a large surplus population. Her foreign conquests, when she makes any, are dictated purely by a desire for territorial aggrandisement; they are not forced upon her

by overcrowding at home; consequently, if she fails in her colonial attempts, she will not experience anything like the corresponding inconvenience or chagrin felt by other countries. On the contrary, the effect is more likely to be beneficial, as she will then be able to devote to the exigencies of internal politics forces which she could ill afford to waste abroad.

When we look at matters from this standpoint we see the utter want of justification for the abuse which has been so lavishly and so bitterly showered upon such ministers as M. de Freycinet. We see in them men who have grasped the true vocation of their country, its real necessities, and its real capacities; men who have had the courage, despite the vituperation of deluded Chauvinism, to lead France along the pathway drawn for her by facts and circumstances, the only pathway which can lead to lasting and substantial success. They have disdained to appeal to the gallery with the showy but pernicious *coups* of an imperialism of necessity foredoomed to failure.

It is the late foreign minister of France, M. Delcassé, who has cleverly, and at the same time most profoundly, characterised the history of a country as a thing organic, which has its natural limits and ways of growth, within which alone it can attain full and healthful development. To push a country along unnatural lines can only lead to weakness and disaster. It is the part of the intelligent and honest politician to single out the natural lines of development and to further his country's growth along them exclusively. This we conscientiously believe the latest statesmen of France to have done to their utmost capacity. It is thoughts like these which led to the renunciation on the

part of France (1890) of her *condominium* with England over the sultanate of Zanzibar. France realised that she occupied there a position which was likely to prove a constant source of useless friction, useless because resulting in no counterbalancing advantage, and she therefore very graciously, but very politically, retired. Her present withdrawal from Egypt is but an amplification or a repetition on a larger scale of the move which she tried and found good at Zanzibar.

When we come to speak of the Italian attitude towards the Egyptian question we are treading upon much more tender ground. By way of preface we may say that the position of Italy has during the last few years undergone an almost entire change, and this change has not been brought about without a very considerable amount of ruffled feelings. The change has not been the cause of any diplomatic ruptures, and consequently has come about without the use of anything but the most polite of phrases. But diplomatists have made it part of their profession to say the harshest things in the most polished words. The threat of war is gilded into considering something as an unfriendly act, so that we may well imagine that much bitterness of heart may underlie quite impeccable civility.

At the risk of irritating the reader we must here once more reiterate the very old remark that politics international in no way resemble private life. It is a remark long ago made by Spinoza, when he said that nations in their dealings one with another are *in statu naturali*; and since Spinoza's day international politics have not been put upon a fresh footing. With a view to what we have to say, we must again deny that the part played by England can be justly termed Machiavellian.

Much has been written against England, who is represented as having lured Italy into African disaster purely in order to further British interests. This is a very harsh and uncompromising fashion of stating the case. And although it has some element of truth, for nobody will to-day deny that Italy was employed as a cat's-paw in the solution of the complicated Central Africa problem, nevertheless it cannot be advanced that England in any way outstepped the recognised rules of the political game. If Italy was encouraged in the undertaking of her disastrous African schemes by English politicians, her catastrophe cannot be laid to England's charge. Whatever encouragement Italy received she must very well have been able to estimate at its intrinsic value, and her military political reverses can be visited upon none but herself.

It will, however, be advisable to cast a rapid glance over the past few years of international politics as far as they are concerned with [the region about the sources of the Nile. It is upon a right comprehension of them, that a correct valuation of Italy's present political interests in Egypt can alone be founded. Without going into the details of the earlier expeditions, of which the aim was to crush the power of the Mahdi, and to secure the upper Nile basin or hinterland of Egypt, expeditions whose ill success is linked with the names of Gordon, Hicks Pasha, etc., etc., we would remind the reader of the situation when England was massing her forces with the determination to deal one final and crushing blow which should annihilate the forces of Mahdism centering about Omdurman and Khartoum. In the event of England succeeding in this campaign, she was fully aware that she would encounter other formidable obstacles to

her complete occupation of the upper Nile basin. Two of these obstacles, at least, she did not see her way to removing forcibly. To the East, she had reasons for anxiety by the constant increase of Abyssinian power already master of several Nile affluents. To the West, the French already far up the Bahr-el-Ghazal seemed on the point of entering into competition with, or even of forestalling, the English. Let us see how England proposed to circumvent these two obstacles.

The Italians were already in possession of a very important outlet on the Red Sea coast in Eretria, and it was their great ambition to ensure the good fortune of this opening by annexing the exceedingly rich hinterland. This could only be done at the expense of Abyssinia. The Italians required encouragement, and encouragement they very naturally received in abundance from the English, who were above all anxious to withdraw Abyssinian attention from the Nile. If the Negus was kept on the Red Sea, he would be unable to either succour the Mahdi or forestall the English in occupying the upper banks of the Nile. That England foresaw the Italian defeat is quite untenable, as that defeat did not at all assist the British calculations, although, by treaty, matters were subsequently satisfactorily arranged with the Negus.

Far more difficult to stem was the French progress up the Bahr-el-Ghazal, when the English Foreign Office hit upon a lucky device, the clever simplicity of which merited better success. In order to avoid having a first-class Power like the French on the left Nile bank, they determined to forestall them by graciously proposing to the Congo State, that is to Belgium, that the coveted territory should be annexed by them. The offer was readily accepted, but the French by subsequent heavy

diplomatic pressure succeeded in getting the Belgians to renounce their rights of possession. The sequel is too well known. The English had finally annihilated Mahdism by the splendidly planned Omdurman campaign, before a weak semi-military French expedition reached Fashoda. Marchand with a couple of hundred men could not think of opposing Kitchener with 25,000. His flag was bound to come down, and although the event caused an effervescence of excitement, the French Government observing the policy which we have already indicated, preferred to capitulate rather than to go to war upon a question of Imperialism in the centre of Africa. Had they really played anything but a dilettante policy in Africa, they might have succeeded in firmly establishing themselves on the Nile long before the fall of Omdurman, that is to say between 1894 and 1896.

The crushing disaster of Adowa, a repetition of the Caudine Forks, in which several thousand Italians surrendered, brought about the collapse of the English-planned diversion of the Negus, but the Italian expedition had already had its desired effect, and the frontiers of Menelik were subsequently delimited in peace. The day of Adowa at the same time sounded the knell of Italian influence in Africa and thus revolutionised her attitude towards Egypt. She has no longer the slightest hope of forming a big East African Colony, and the *status quo* of Egypt becomes to her, in consequence, a matter of the most supreme indifference. It can afford her no card in the diplomatic game. We shall see in a subsequent chapter that if Italy still retains any interest in Africa, it can only be that of finding an outlet for her over-population, and it is hard to see how she can find such an outlet without running counter to English interests. This question of over-

crowding is beginning to agitate Italy as it already agitates Germany. With a square mileage little more than half that of France, Italy sustains or endeavours to sustain nearly an equal population. She cannot exist without emigration, and yet is alarmed that this emigration should flow westwards to North and South America where her sons are lost for ever to their native country, since Italy cannot hope to establish a political footing in South America in defiance of the Monroe doctrine.

We need not go into the sore feelings which the Italians undoubtedly do feel to some extent with regard to England whom they consider to have duped them into their Abyssinian calamities, but we would point out that Italy is not likely to take the British side in the case of any anti-British combination. For one reason or another she is deeply interested against England, and should there be a prospect of one day sharing in British spoils, she would be too glad to have a part in relief of her necessities. Italy, moreover, being well fortified and protected, lies less naked to attack from the sea. Consequently we cannot expect Italy to be very desirous of maintaining the British footing in Egypt, should she consider it to be advantageous to Britain; if it is not advantageous, the matter, as we have already said, is to Italy one of complete indifference.

This was, however, not the case a few years ago when on Egyptian matters Italy was hand-and-glove with England. This friendship was then inspired by unity of interests. Italy already bent on her misfated expedition was only too anxious to help the English forward in their advance up Nile, possibly with a view to co-operation later on at the head-waters of the Nile. This will explain Italy's support of England when the

latter appealed to the *Caisse* for £500,000 to go to Dongola, and on this occasion the voice of Italy united to that of Austria and Germany turned the balance in favour of England against France and Russia. But Italy, as we have shown, can now no longer afford to be friendly without compensation.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH IMPERIAL POLICY

We have to the best of our ability followed out the plan which we expressed in beginning, and taking one by one the various threads whose complex intertwinings go to form the knot of the Egyptian question, we have endeavoured to separately disentangle and unravel each. The general result which we have reached is apparently negative, since all our conclusions have gone to prove that no European Power has any imperative interest in maintaining the present *status quo* in Egypt. We speak, let it be clearly understood, of political interest, for of the common financial interest, that is, of the *Caisse*, it is our intention to speak later on. As the financial and political interest have in reality nothing in common, we have thought it most expedient to keep their treatment quite dissevered.

This apparently negative result is, however, negative only in appearance. Up to the present day people have regarded the question as an international one, always a fruitful source of friction and best handled with caution, or even better still left entirely alone. It seems that no one felt capable of dealing with the matter without falling into a degree of warmth likely to lead to the gravest consequences, possibly even to a general European conflagration. With such a prospect before their eyes

no wonder that the European Powers esteemed it more expedient to let the Commission of Occupation, with which they had entrusted Great Britain, continue indefinitely. The British occupation, at all events, avoided the necessity of bringing the awkward question up again, at all events for the time being. This temporary solution of the difficulty was undoubtedly rendered much more easy, much more satisfactory, by the faultless tact shown by the statesman whom England appointed to represent her in Egypt. It is difficult to overrate the conduct of such men as Lord Cromer, against whom indeed even the most embittered fault-finders of British policy have refrained, as a rule, from uttering a word of disparagement. He has, indeed, won universal esteem for the manner in which he has filled a post full of thorns and difficulties, without once transgressing the limits of the utmost courtesy. He has known how to yield graciously when he could yield without injuring the interests of his country, and he has known how to exact rigorously, but without giving offence, when the British policy compelled him to be exacting. Lord Cromer's tact has served as a model on which numberless other officials have moulded their conduct, and things have therefore on the whole gone very smoothly.

To-day, as we have shown, the situation has changed. The over-sensitive apprehensions of almost every European Power with regard to Egypt has cooled down and down, until each of them, we have seen, regards the maintenance of the present condition with complete indifference. Various circumstances render the recurrence of general European wars improbable, that is to say, the renewal of wars involving at once more than two or

three nations. The international questions have been reduced until probably the only remaining one of importance is the problem of Turkish dismemberment. The majority of European Powers, in order to avoid the constant minor annoyances which always kept them uneasy of international war, have contrived to interpose, between their frontier, zones of neutral territory, by which they are kept out of serious collision. It is thus that Holland has been neutralised, *de facto*, and Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland *de lege*. They form, as it were, dead spots upon the map of Europe, themselves protected from aggression by general consent, and acting as it were as wads to prevent the Great Powers lying on either side of them from being in a constant state of mutual irritation. Since this change has come over the map of Europe, the great political questions have become questions either of home politics or else of extra-European affairs, of distant colonial expansion, and thus rarely threaten the peace of more than two countries at once. Now that the great causes of general dissension are removed, the Powers can regard with less dread a final settlement of the Egyptian question.

We have seen, then, that the question has ceased to be an important one for international politics, and is thus, as a matter of fact, reduced to a question in which the British and Egyptians themselves have the only powerful direct interests. We shall, accordingly, in the first place, enter upon a discussion of British interests, and we must necessarily preface our remarks with a few observations upon British Imperial policy in general.

It will at once be easy for us to draw a natural

contrast between the Imperial vocations of England and France. We have shown that a policy of distant conquest is injurious to France, and we shall proceed to show that, as far as England is concerned, the converse is true. England has long been and still is, though admittedly in a less degree, an expanding country; she is naturally less fitted than France to become a great agricultural country, and she can never hope like the latter to become a self-supporting country. Her impulse to found distant colonies is hence natural. She has, unhappily, no favourable field for expansion close to her doors like that possessed by France in Algeria and Tunisia. She has, since the Middle Ages, so thoroughly abandoned all idea of acquiring permanently a rood of land on the Continental mainland, that the idea of her again becoming a conquering Power on the Continent has become to be looked on as absurd even by the most aggressive jingoes. That all such intentions have, once and for all, been laid aside, we have even documentary evidence in the Treaty of Vienna (1815), when England did not even propose that she should be allotted so much as a French fortress. We have already had occasion to indicate the circumstances which have permitted England to pursue a successful Imperial career; we have shown that all questions of internal politics have in England since the Restoration of Charles II (1660) taken the mildest forms: she has had her political fevers, her ecclesiastical fevers, her social fevers; but in the form of most attenuated attacks, which have rarely entailed the letting of blood, certainly never the wholesale bleeding which Continental countries have required for their cure,—whether this was due to the conscious or

sub-conscious resolve of the British to shelve all internal disagreeables in order to have a free scope for external acquisition, or whether the shelving of intestine subjects of dissension induced external expansion, does not here enter into discussion. We deal in results. Nobody can further deny that England has an imperial vocation, that is, that Imperialism of some degree is the condition of her greatness, and that Imperialism rightly carried out is a source of strength to her at home.

England's passion for Imperialism has undergone phases, it has at no time suffered eclipse. All Englishmen when probed to the quick will be found Imperialists at heart: they differ among themselves only on questions of method and degree.

Every one will still vividly recollect the wave of feverish Imperialism which swept over England in the nineties. It was no doubt induced by this consideration, that England no longer stood alone in the race for territorial acquisition. She, then, no doubt for the first time, was quickened to the fact that she had a competitor, among the Great Powers, in Germany, and this time no dilettante competitor, but one whose colonial schemes were the fruit of necessity. This was the time of the dawn of Rhodesism, and the feeling was diligently fostered by such men as Chamberlain. When the success of Omdurman seemed to justify the fondest hopes, excitement rose to fever pitch. The defeat of the Dervishes, the outcome of an exceedingly vigorous campaign of which the final stunning blow proved the greatest talent and ability in the planner, was translated in the most extravagant manner. The British Empire was to become a second Roman Empire. There was no longer any possibility of withstanding

British omnipotence. If new territories could not be won by intelligence, they could at least be taken by might. Imperialism had certainly run wild. Enthusiasm seemed to have invaded Continental neighbours, witness the publication of such works as *À quoi tient la Supériorité des Anglo-Saxons*," to be seen in those days on every book-stall.

The long protracted campaigns for the conquest of the Transvaal and Orange Colonies, the loss of men, the vast expenditure of money, had a very sobering effect. The balance was restored and people began to look at the over-inflated Imperialism with more critical gaze. They began to see that though Imperialism was undoubtedly good, exaggerated Imperialism was assuredly not good. They began to see that there is more than one way of arriving at the same end; that some ways are business-like and some are not; that brute force does not always succeed, and is invariably expensive; that soft words frequently achieve as much as hard blows; that some things are worth having, some are not; that you cannot afford to pay long for luxuries. In fact, men's minds were so filled with this variety of reflections that they were hardly to be recognised for the same men they had been two or three years before. The realisation that the way to Empire is not to be found in riding rough-shod over the interests of all opponents, and the knowledge that white men require an inordinate amount of fighting down, whatever their nationality, led to a resumption of the old methods. It was found that much could be won with a little skilful diplomacy which very possibly could never be extorted at the bayonet's point. Men discovered the truth of Napoleon's famous dictum,

"*On peut tout faire avec les baïonettes excepté s'asseoir dessus.*" From this moment we may date the return of England towards an European policy. She no longer seeks to maintain her splendid but impolitic isolation. She realises that nothing is to be achieved by setting herself against the whole of Europe, whereas much may be got by balancing one European Power against another. The new policy of conciliation has been brilliantly inaugurated by H.M. King Edward VII, to whose tact the late satisfactory arrangement with France is in great measure due. That the country is against an out and out jingo policy is sufficiently proved by the turn of recent bye-elections.

A strong foreign policy consists in rightly valuing its objectives, in realising that possession at all costs is not the true watchword. Real Imperialism attains its ends by three courses: conquest, diplomacy or retrocession. The attitude of "Here I am and here I stop" is not always the most advantageous, and we shall produce proofs to show that England has at all times recognised the correctness of this latter statement, that much can be obtained by compromise.

We shall not fatigue the reader with a multitude of examples in which England has retired from possessions which she has deemed it impolitic to retain. We shall take only two salient instances, the sacrifice of Corsica to the French, and the retrocession of the Ionian Islands to Greece. Both of these events, in order that we may understand them profitably, will require a short treatment from the historical point of view.

So completely now-a-days has all heart-burning on account of the abandonment of Corsica been allayed, that it may be doubted whether the majority of

Englishmen still remember that it once formed a part of the British Empire. Yet no fairer strategic point of vantage could be imagined. With the possession of this island, lying as it does immediately opposite the Southern French littoral, the English held a constant check upon the most important of the French naval bases, besides having a stronghold from which they could destroy French Mediterranean commerce or even dispatch a harrying expedition to France itself.

A very short occupation (November 1793—July 1796) convinced the English that even with the inhabitants' goodwill their position would always be a difficult one, whilst it was clear that as long as England held Corsica, as a perpetual menace to France, there could be no peace with that country. The complete conquest of Corsica would have entailed the expenditure of more time and money than the English were disposed to hazard for the winning of what they clearly could never maintain permanently. And at that particular moment they could not lavish money where it could be spared. The position under these conditions was obviously untenable, and was accordingly evacuated; and nobody to-day would any longer question the wisdom of the Government which forestalled infinite trouble to come, by this timely withdrawal.

Even the most unintelligent eye could not fail, upon looking at a map of the Mediterranean, to see the wonderful strategic importance of the Ionian Islands, and above all of Corfu. Lying as they do under the shelter of the Greek coast, but just opposite to the point where the heel of Italy draws closest to Epirus, they effectively command the entrance to the

Adriatic. At the present day a Naval Power in possession of them would render useless the whole of the Austro-Hungarian seaboard, by cutting off its one outlet to the Mediterranean; it would, moreover, paralyse the whole eastern coast of Italy. The importance of Zante and Corfu early forced itself upon the Venetians, and we are not surprised at them having firmly established themselves in the islands. But, apart from this, we have the excellent testimony of Napoleon, who may be trusted as knowing what he is talking about when he discusses the strategic *pros* and *cons* of any position. As early as 1796 we have letters of Napoleon, which the reader may verify for himself, in the collected edition of his correspondence, in which he insists upon the necessity of sticking hard to obtain Corfu at all costs. He says that it were better to sacrifice all Northern Italy and Venice rather than to lose the key of the Adriatic. But Corfu has yet other advantages besides that of being a pre-eminently excellent naval base. Its close proximity to the Albanian mainland makes it a point of supreme advantage to anybody taking a hand in Near Eastern politics. With Corfu in one's hands, it would be easy to intervene in the Balkans without too much risk of being meddled with in return.

We cannot here, nor would it be to the point to give a detailed history of the various occupations of the Ionian Islands, before they were ultimately handed over to the English in 1814, as a reward, by Louis XVIII, for valuable services received. Suffice it to say that they were employed with great advantage by Napoleon as a stepping-stone towards Egypt, and, as he hoped, towards India; and he subsequently hoped to make them exceedingly valuable in his designs on Central Europe.

His hopes were blighted at Aboukir Bay, but, although three of the islands were afterwards captured by the English fleet, Corfu continued to hold out until Napoleon's abdication.

The gift of Louis XVIII was upheld by the Congress of Vienna, or, to put it more precisely, the Treaty decided that the Septinsular Republic should be revived under the protection of Great Britain. It is interesting to read of the way in which the first British High Commissioner, Maitland, construed his office; of the parody of constitutional government which he set up; and of the iron rule with which he held sway over the restive Corfiote nobility. Under his reign the English improved the island greatly, laid roads, and strengthened its already strong position. Subsequent Commissioners, with profound insight into Greek nature, were less successful, and Maitland's constitutional parody made itself under them exceedingly disagreeable. Finally everything was capped by annual votes of adhesion to the as yet non-existent Kingdom of Greece. All these matters will be found excellently chronicled in the book of Mr. Lord entitled *England's Lost Possessions.* So things progressed until 1864.

We are not yet admitted into all the secrets of government, and are unable to tell all the puissant motives which led to Mr. Gladstone's cession of the islands in 1864. The difficulties of keeping the natives in order were no doubt great, but England had patiently overcome them for fifty years, and did not lose patience now. Neither was England compelled to abandon the islands, as is currently said, in order to secure the non-election of the Franco-Russian candidate, the Duke of Leuchtenberg, to the Greek throne. The outcry raised

against the evacuation was great; it was confidently predicted that England's naval preponderance in the Mediterranean was gone for ever, a fear which subsequent years have sufficiently allayed.

It would, of course, have been highly foolish upon the part of England to let the islands go in a haphazard fit of generosity; nor did she commit such a blunder. It is upon the manner of her abandonment that we would particularly insist. England was willing to allow the Corfiotes their liberty, but upon condition, that their island should be rendered innocuous in the future. England manifested the greatest willingness to withdraw, and declared her candid desire to retire from a position which she could not properly secure without playing tyrant to the natives. It was not however to be expected that England would evacuate the Islands in order that they should fall into the hands of another, and later be used as a weapon against herself. Austria also was anxious to secure the neutrality of the Islands, and she demanded, in common with England, that all fortifications should be demolished and that Greece should be expressly prohibited from establishing any military or naval post in the Archipelago. These demands however were only partially conceded, and eventually Corfu and Paxo were alone neutralised.

England has not since found occasion to repent the magnanimity of her action, but we do not suppose that that magnanimity was not coupled with sound political considerations. England undoubtedly filled a false position in Corfu: a position which might frequently have proved a stumbling-block to her in diplomacy. Her mandate of occupation expressly stated that the islands were independent, although quite subordinate to the

British High Commissioner. For several years England tried to the best of her powers to carry this anomaly into execution; but she was not successful. It was obvious that the Islands must be British or not British. It was useless trying any longer to ape free institutions; they must either be really granted or wholly withdrawn, and England could not well tolerate the annual secession voted by the Corfiote Assembly, yet to disregard it was to show the mockery of the Corfiote constitution. To throw up the mandate of the Powers and to assert her right to the Islands by conquest England evidently did not consider consistent with her honour or interests. Meanwhile, though the diplomatic archives do not reveal their secrets, we may shrewdly guess that England's false position was frequently called into service by her opponents in order to extort diplomatic concessions. The situation was no doubt becoming fast unbearable: the Corfiotes were every day taking a more serious view of their fictitious independence, and it was probable that the annexation of Corfu, pure and simple, might have necessitated bloodshed, even should the other Powers be acquiescent. It is quite certain that England was fully aware of the grandeur of the strategic position she was sacrificing, but the magnitude of the sacrifice was very much mitigated, once she secured her demands of neutralisation; and her deliverance from a false position calculated to seriously hamper, if not cripple her diplomacy, was not an advantage to be despised.

In the sequel, England has not found her naval superiority in the Mediterranean impaired; and if in the case of war it should become important to reoccupy Corfu, England would stand as good if not a better

chance of securing the Islands than would any other Power.

All this has gone to show that even in an Imperialist policy there are moments when retirement and seeming self-abnegation are not misplaced, and when, though sheer force would very probably have proved successful, yet its employment would not have been adequately rewarded.

CHAPTER IV

FALSE POSITION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN EGYPT

It would be very untrue argument to say that in politics all false positions are pernicious, for it is, on the contrary, generally recognised that in political life we cannot get on without them. The stiff and starched moralist may perhaps take exception to what he considers a very debasing principle to admit, but we would once more warn the reader against endeavouring to conduct politics upon the same strict principles which we at all events strive to observe in private life; he will not succeed. In private life we would vigorously uphold the doctrine that false positions are a man's ruin: he must avoid them with all his power, and if ever he by inadvertence or misfortune allows himself to be drawn into one, he must escape from it at all hazards and at all sacrifices. In politics, perhaps unhappily but by their very nature, we are bound to accept false positions. We cannot always attain that excellent and primitive bluntness which having once called a spade a spade closes the subject for ever. We cannot always reconcile the *de facto* with the *de jure*, and however much the moralist may cry out, we are bound to tolerate situations which in private life would be very rightly called lies, but which in politics, when they take any name at all, are termed compromises. Any one in the slightest degree acquainted with history knows that the

institutions of all great countries are full of these false positions, morally speaking flaws no doubt, but politically the only means of untying Gordian knots which it has been found impracticable to sever with the sword. Problems have thus indeed been resolved amicably which would have turned the edge of any sword. We would not burthen the reader with over-many historical illustrations, and ask him only to reflect a moment upon such an institution as the English Cabinet. The Cabinet undoubtedly governs the country, but the most subtle student of constitutional history, the most diligent sifter of documents would be unable to find a single act assigning the Cabinet *de jure* the right of governing the land *de facto*. It most undoubtedly possesses the power, yet legally the very existence of the Cabinet is ignored. It is, moreover, only by means of political fictions that England succeeded in gaining a constitutional king, who though possessing *de jure* the unlimited powers of an absolute sovereign, yet knows only too well that, *de facto*, he must abstain from employing them. We might adduce a myriad of even more cogent examples in support of the statement that political false positions are not only admissible but are frequently absolutely needful.

We shall then abstain from riding upon the moral high horse, and, as we have already said, we shall make no reproaches. The fact that England has repeatedly declared her intention of evacuating Egypt,[1] and yet to

[1] By the Convention of Constantinople, dated May 22, 1887, and signed by the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff, and the Turkish minister, Great Britain undertook to evacuate Egypt within three years, reserving, however, certain rights of temporary reoccupation. Through the interference of France and Russia, this Convention was not ratified by the Sultan, and so remained a dead letter.

the present day has failed to fulfil her engagement, we shall certainly not take into consideration from the point of view of abstract morality; such a discussion, although it affords ample scope for anti-British declamation, and has hitherto furnished, and will doubtless continue to furnish, gutter-scribblers with many a sounding period, does not advance the candid investigator nor the well-meaning counsellor one jot or one tittle. All we wish at present to discover is whether the maintenance of England's false position in Egypt really pays her. Does it really mean business ?

The advantages which England derives from Egypt are undoubtedly immense. Are they in any way enhanced by England's semi-occupation of the country ? Would they in any way be impaired by its evacuation ?

In order to take as wide a view of the case as possible we shall first try to step into the shoes of an excessive Jingo, endeavour to see the matter through his glasses, and to imagine the arguments which he would use in justification of the continuance of the British occupation. Thereafter we shall change personalities, and assume the frame of mind of one who would promote the evacuation of Egypt. When we have examined what both parties have to say, and when we have criticised their arguments in more or less detail, the reader will find little difficulty in drawing conclusions for himself.

It must be admitted that the Jingo has one very strong argument in his favour, at least it appears at the first flush to be exceedingly strong. "You see," says he, "Egypt lies on the road to the East, and its possession by a Power, hostile to England, would entail the speedy loss of India. I take it as the keystone of British Imperialism that we should keep in our stronghold all

points lying upon or about the Indian route; and for this reason I consider that as we are in Egypt we certainly ought to stop there." The argument looks very fair, but it is not slow, upon closer scrutiny, in showing several exceedingly weak points. To begin with, Egypt no longer lies upon the direct route to India, which now runs through the Suez Canal. Even the most unmitigated Jingo has not yet taken upon himself to propose the seizure of the neutralised Suez Canal. He can not even with a semblance of plausibility declare that the occupation of Egypt is necessary in order to ensure the free navigation of the Red Sea. He must be fully aware that, whether he has Egypt or no, the Red Sea will be open to him as long as he maintains the dominant sea power. Should his sea power be worsted, he might possess Egypt, with Arabia into the bargain, without being able to venture upon the Red Sea. He must see that the self-same argument would compel him further to annex the whole of the northern coast of Africa; he would have besides to forestall Germans and French in Morocco, and to hunt the French out of Tunis and Algiers. It would be exceedingly perilous for him to leave the flag of any other nation hoisted over any single Mediterranean Island. But he has long shown that he does not seriously hold this view. He knows very well that the mastery of the Mediterranean does not depend upon the holding of this or that strip of littoral, but upon the keeping up of a fleet which cannot be defied. We need hardly recall the history of past dominations in the Mediterranean to show that it has never been ruled by the Powers which possessed the greatest stretches of the surrounding coasts. The Arabs, despite the fact that for centuries they held the eastern,

southern, and western shores, and were strong in Sicily and Crete, were never able to molest seriously the Mediterranean traffic save by sporadic corsair expeditions. This was so because they had no organised sea power. Crusades were able to come and go scatheless, and European trade was never forced to abandon the great water ways of commerce. But we need not go back to such antique days, when the history of modern times supplies us with precedents enough. We have the classical instance of the Napoleonic expedition of 1798-9 to which we have already so frequently referred. It is sufficient proof in itself, that the mere occupation of Egypt without the possession of the sea is unavailing. It showed, indeed, that so long as another power holds the Mediterranean, the protracted occupation of Egypt is impossible. Now in the maintenance of naval superiority Egypt is of no particular value. We may remember that in the eighteenth century when England possessed no point of vantage in the Mediterranean save Gibraltar, yet the whole sea was hers by virtue of the stronger fleet. In these times, when steam has ousted canvas, it is perhaps necessary to have more naval bases, but England in this respect is amply provided with Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, and the giving back of Corfu would seem to show that even Malta and Gibraltar might satisfy her. To sum up this rejoinder to the Jingo's arguments, we may briefly say that so long as English naval power is dominant in the Mediterranean, she is quite secure of free access to India. Should her naval superiority by any unforeseen calamity be overcome, the retention of Egypt would become impossible and would at all events be an unavailing compensation.

On the other hand, it cannot be advanced that commercial advantages impel England to retain or to consolidate her hold upon Egypt. All that England requires is free trade with the country, and this can be obtained equally well by means other than forcible occupation. The evacuation of Egypt would not at all involve the increase of commercial competition. England has so far maintained her trading superiority, because she has maintained the superiority of her mercantile marine. It is because of the power of her shipping that she has so far headed the list in Egyptian commerce and not because she is the most privileged nation. Egypt will continue to be a large buyer in the English markets for years to come, not owing to the undue influence of the English, but because she finds there the things which best suit her requirements, and can buy them at the most reasonable figure. The commercial question cannot be regarded as in any manner influenced by the political conditions.

The advocate of evacuation can only wonder what are the motives which have so far induced the English to keep so tenacious a hold upon Egypt. He fails to see what great advantages England reaps thereby. Egypt undoubtedly furnishes employment for two or three hundred British civil servants and officials, but it would be absurd to suppose that the policy of a Great Empire turns upon so minor a consideration. But beyond this what motives can there be? We have shown that the evacuation will entail neither strategic nor commercial loss; there is no European power desirous or capable of seizing the position if vacated by England. France has verbally declared that her interests lie elsewhere, and we have independently

demonstrated that France could in no case have serious designs on Egypt, and that, had she such designs, they would require for their realisation the preliminary demolition of English sea power. We have likewise shown that Germany is not to be feared, while the lesser powers may be in this respect disregarded. What, then, induces England to remain?

Can it be that she is haunted by the dream of Rhodes, the hope of seeing English rule permanently established from the Cape to Cairo? It is only natural that she should cherish such a design; and nobody would expect her to lay it aside.

Yet there are more ways of attaining an end than one. It does not follow that the British line of Empire from the Cape to Cairo must consist of territories crushed into implicit obedience to the English Crown. The British Government has always recognised the axiom that British Imperial possessions may be of various types; England has her federated Colonies, like Canada or Australia, bound to her only by the tie of sentiment, her provinces like India, and various degrees and stages of protectorate; and even, as in India, what we may call her Imperial Allies, are firmly attached to her, but upon an equal footing.

Why should not Egypt form a type of this latter category? It is owing to the English tutelage that she has become fit to assume such a position, and will England deny her the capacity to play the part for which she has herself educated her? Free, but under the eye of England who encompasses her on every side, Egypt would be as profitable to England, more loyal if loyalty were required, and at any rate out of any possibility of doing harm. The real position which we

consider that liberated Egypt should be made to fill, we shall explain in a later portion of our work.

When we speak of evacuating Egypt we do not speak of abandoning it. We have conclusively shown that there is no possibility of any other European Power stepping into the shoes vacated by England, and the possible sources of future danger to England are therefore reduced to Egypt itself. A very few words will suffice to show that Egypt if free could never dream of assuming a hostile attitude towards England : if she did so, the result would be rapidly fatal to herself. In the event of England withdrawing her garrison from Egypt, a garrison which even now has been reduced almost to a small force, Egypt would still remain, in the case of any untoward circumstances supervening, under the absolute control of Great Britain. On two sides Egypt is already cut off by the sea, while to the west she has a frontier still more effective in the desert. One side alone remains without a natural barrier, and this is the southern limit towards the Soudan. When we hint at England setting an end to her occupation of Egypt, it must be once and for all clearly understood that we do not for a moment even suggest that she should also vacate the Soudan. Such a move would be quite out of the question, and no minister could for a moment take it into consideration. But England stands in the Soudan upon a completely different footing to that which she occupies in Egypt. The Soudan is hers by the best right, the right of conquest. It is thoroughly English. We, of course, do not mean to disregard the fact that the Soudan is nominally under the *condominium* of Egypt and Great Britain, but that *condominium* is an empty formality which certainly harbours no false position.

A little negotiation with the Egyptian Government and the matter could be set down clearly in black and white and beyond the range of any ambiguous construction. There is no need here to anticipate any difficulty. That England is the sole proprietor has long ago been diplomatically acknowledged. The fact was, if not formally, for it was hardly considered necessary, at least effectively admitted by France. The negotiations between Lord Salisbury and the French Government for the delimitation of the respective French and British dominions and spheres of influence in Central Africa, are still quite fresh in people's minds. Lord Salisbury's immense territorial concessions to the French, the handing over to them of the Wadai, are still clearly remembered. At the same time the limits of the Soudan were firmly laid down. Now, unless the Soudan were the recognised property of the British Government, it would have been impossible for the French Government to admit the right of the British representative for selling the Soudanese frontier; if the Soudan were in reality an Anglo-Egyptian *condominium* it would be impossible to do anything concerning it without taking the Egyptian Government into consideration. But the French Government never raised the slightest difficulty upon this point, and they thereby took for granted the validity of the British title. The Egyptians, it is true, took a share in its conquest, and it is therefore necessary that we should set their aid in a true light. The destruction of the power of Mahdism was, it is almost unnecessary to say, a matter of paramount importance for Egypt, whose southern limit, so long as Khartoum was left standing, was always kept on the tenterhooks of anxiety, and was constantly in peril of invasion. The

trade routes with Equatorial Africa were closed, and thus one of Egypt's most legitimate sources of profit was shut against her. Great Britain had other reasons for wishing to see the demolition of the great Mahdist fortress, beyond her interest in the furtherance of Egyptian commerce, in which she would naturally very largely participate. The weight of the Mahdi's power also made itself very disagreeably felt in the hinterland of the British West African Colonies, and very much impeded their development. It is quite authentically stated that Mahdist proclamations were found placarded as far west as Benin and Kumassi. In fact, the whole trade of Central Equatorial Africa was either stopped or rendered exceedingly perilous.

It was owing to the initiative of the British Government, and in spite of strenuous opposition of France and of Russia, that the Omdurman expedition was set on foot. We have already had occasion to show how England secured Italian support in winning a vote of £500,000 from the Egyptian *Caisse*. But we have not yet pointed out the use which England made of that vote.

No sooner had England secured the vote, than France and Russia went to work to bring about its condemnation in the Egyptian courts. Thus it came about that the Soudan campaign was fought by the British taxpayer. Whether Egyptian troops or British troops were employed is not very material. Egyptian troops were undoubtedly very well suited to the work, and distinguished themselves much in the campaign, all which redounds to their credit. The fact remains that the campaign was British in inception, British in money, and made successful by British strategy, and there is,

therefore, no stretching of the imagination required in order to call the Soudan a British conquest.

Let us now examine the importance of the Soudan as a British possession. If the Soudan was most advantageously subdued by using Egypt as a base of operations, it must be remembered that since its conquest it is also accessible from the rear, and every day becomes more accessible. In the future the passage through Egypt to the Soudan, although convenient, will not be necessary, so that a British garrison in Khartoum cannot be cut off from supplies and reinforcements by the will of Egypt. But it must be seen that England, in command of the sea and with a force in the Soudan, holds the destinies of Egypt in her hands, apart from any question of mutual interests, which would be strong enough in themselves to secure peace; nevertheless, the Egyptians could never venture to incur the enmity of England, by whom they could be held in absolute insulation.

The vast importance of the Soudan for Egypt has been recognised almost as far back as human records carry us. It is the one objective for which the Egyptian Pharaohs fought with unwavering perseverance, and they were no doubt influenced by identically the same motives which inspired the latter-day Egyptians with a desire to break the power of Mahdism. The life of Egypt hangs, as it were, upon a single thread, and that thread is the Nile, and the Power which controls the Upper Nile at the same time holds Egypt in obedience. Divert the Nile and the history of Egypt is diverted for ever.

We are so far led to two conclusions: the evacuation of Egypt can lead to no injury to British commerce; it entails no strategic danger to England, either from

other Continental Powers or from Egypt itself. No principle forbids England to retire, seeing that she has retired from other positions with honour and advantage. We need not, then, seriously regard the jingo call of "Here we are and here we stop."

We have already examined British Imperialism in general, and we shall again examine it to see whether we cannot find other cases in which England has been confronted with situations precisely similar to that with which she is brought face to face in Egypt, and we shall also see whether the solutions which she has adopted are not precisely similar to that which we suggest that she may eventually think fit to apply in the case of Egypt.

If we look at one of the coloured maps of India we notice that vast tracts of country are marked as independent principalities under the governance of native potentates. In the majority of cases these principalities fill precisely the same position which Egypt would fill in case of her emancipation. They are entirely girt about by territories under direct British rule; and although the English, for divers political motives, have not thought fit to conquer them, their good behaviour, as they are well aware, is the only condition upon which their independence is preserved.

In return for evacuation England will have the satisfaction of freeing herself from a false position which has certainly hitherto proved a serious clog to her in her diplomatic dealings. There can be no doubt that England has frequently had to pay a heavy price in her negotiations for her unfortunate Egyptian position.

We do not wish to cast a slur upon the present *entente cordiale* with France, when everything looks so fair and calm, but one is tempted to ask what great

advantage has England derived after all by the abdication on the part of France of her Egyptian interests? If England were meditating the forcible occupation of Egypt it might perhaps be satisfactory for England to know that her action would not arouse any resentment upon the part of France, that she would have no obstacles thrown in her way by the French. We have already given very good reasons for thinking that such an occupation, even could it be brought about without a hitch, without resistance, would be anything but beneficial to England. But the Paris treaty of April 8th, 1904, expressly precludes us from supposing that English statesmen have any such steps in contemplation. The terms of the Anglo-French Agreement are exceedingly precise upon this point, and England declares that she has in view no modification of existing conditions in Egypt. What great prize, then, was the French renunciation? On the other hand, the French undoubtedly secured a very substantial return for their polite assurances of non-interference in Egypt. No doubt, an exaggerated estimate of the value of English interests in Morocco has been arrived at by recent writers. We have already shown that, commercially speaking, Germany has more at stake in that country than any other European nation. The English, at all events, had greater trade interests than the French, and to what extent these may have been fostered it is impossible to say. Morocco is a country as yet imperfectly known and showing probabilities of great wealth. There can be no objection to England's consenting to withdraw from all her pretentions to a share in that wealth, and to her permitting France eventually to make another close preserve of the country, after the manner of Algeria,

supposing England to score thereby some diplomatic advantage in return. In diplomacy, generosity is as a rule entirely out of place. It is a game of give and take, and if you give more than you receive, it does not improve in any way your diplomatic credit. It would seem, then, that England in retiring from Morocco, where she has for years been cultivating commercial outlets with no small degree of success, has given away a good asset and a potentially very good asset in exchange for what is not much more than a formality. The evacuation of Egypt should certainly save England from the repetition of such poor diplomatic display.

But it is not of disadvantages in international politics, following upon the false position filled by England in Egypt, but of the disadvantages under which she labours in Egypt itself that we would speak. The fact that the English officials exercise very real powers in Egypt, but that their power is grounded on no solid or at least presentable foundation; the fact that their position can be backed by no appeal to authority, at once subjects them to numberless petty vexations. On several occasions English officials, when driven to justify their situation, have been compelled to eat humble pie. In many cases English officials have been relieved of their posts for no particular reason, or have failed to obtain positions despite recommendations issuing from the highest quarters, and all this because it was desired to avoid creating any serious disturbances. We have already said that things have been kept running smoothly so far, chiefly owing to the unfailing and imperturbable tact of Lord Cromer, but the position which depends upon tact as its mainstay is in itself false. In politics, much as one would prefer everything tactfully done,

there come moments when self-assertion is absolutely imperative. In Egypt these occasions have to be slurred over as best they can. People who have been personally connected with the Egyptian Government know well that these awkward positions are of daily occurrence. The English have on paper no recognised position in the Egyptian Government, and with the exception of the post of Financial Adviser, there is none which is of necessity filled by an Englishman, and yet in the chief Government offices the English predominate. But why they are there they cannot say.

All this avoidance of saying the direct thing, this fear of proclaiming what is a fact but remains unacknowledged, this hesitation to define one's real position, as it crops up almost daily, does not seem worthy of the government of a Great Empire. Why this constant resort to subterfuge, which can not in the long run fail to become repugnant or debasing to the straightforward? But, unhappily, this false position is guilty of graver results than mere momentary inconveniences, however disheartening these latter may be. It has given to British politics in Egypt an unworthy hesitancy which has had to be paid for very dear, and it has brought England under the shadow of what we may be quite confident is an ungrounded but none the less dark suspicion. We refer of course to the tragic policy which led up to the unhappy death, illumined by heroic steadfastness of purpose, of General Gordon. The enemies of England have pointed to his abandonment as one of the blackest deeds of England's Machiavellian intrigues; they have regarded it as deliberately planned to afford England an occasion for proclaiming the necessity of an English protectorate. One can confidently give the lie

direct to such a sinister construction, of which the British Government and Mr. Gladstone were quite incapable, but one cannot but regret the policy which can allow of such charges being made with the slightest show of plausibility. The diary of Gordon gives us some clue to the mystery. It at any rate records the repeated calls for assistance, the appeals for help which never came. For the British Government to have despatched a relief column of 2,000 men could have presented no difficulty, but if we read the matter aright, time was frittered away in debating who should send assistance, who was to bear the trifling expense, the English Government, owing to its false position, being unwilling to act upon its own initiative. It is clear on the most elementary consideration that a false position which brings the government of a great country within the possibility of causing such disasters were best quitted at all costs and as soon as feasible.

From the consideration of British Imperialism as developed in various quarters of the globe, we cannot honestly assume that the permanent occupation of Egypt by England forms any necessary part of British Imperialism. We have shown, on the contrary, that the evacuation could not possibly entail any danger, and that Egypt would remain, although independent, within the circle of British power both by sea and land, which fact would be a sufficient guarantee for her future good behaviour.

The British evacuation, we may be told, might no doubt be advantageous, and the complete occupation of Egypt by Great Britain, as it requires no perspicacity to see, would entail all kinds of difficulties, might even end in a serious war, and at all events would certainly not pay.

But what are the crying evils of the actual situation? We have already shown the numerous vexations which England has had to submit to in her diplomacy and also the manifold heart-burnings and disagreeables which are the constant accompaniment of her ill-defined authority. We will now, however, go into the details of various other drawbacks and disadvantages which will furnish us with a multitude of further arguments entitling us to assume, that the proposed evacuation by England is, from strictly British points of view, neither so absurd nor so injurious as British extremists would have us to believe.

One of the most crying evils of present-day Egypt is undoubtedly to be found in the whole system, or rather want of system, of jurisdiction. We do not intend here to dwell upon mere formal incongruities, nor do we wish to make capital out of the logical discrepancies of the present state of affairs. We would insist only upon the material facts and point out the immense material damage caused, not only to England, but to Egypt, by the utter confusion which reigns in her jurisdiction. Where ready and rapid administration of justice is not to be obtained, people lose confidence in one another, trust and credit are weak, and the ill effects are not long in making themselves felt upon commerce, which is slowly paralysed from want of confidence.

The stranger passing through Egypt sees little of the numberless checks and hindrances by which the course of justice is impeded, it is only he who has dwelt long in the land that knows how difficult, how very nearly impossible, it is to bring the defaulter to book, and unhappily Egypt is a land in which the profession of defaulters is not to be disguised.

It is certainly not for lack of tribunals that Egypt

lacks justice; the sources of justice are indeed so manifold that, in the end, one frequently misses obtaining any. As is well known, Egypt for some inexplicable reason stands still outside the comity of nations. That is to say, she is still deprived of what is almost universally recognised as one of the principal attributes of sovereign power, namely, the right of dealing out her own justice. The consulates in Egypt are at the same time courts of justice before which the foreigners of each particular nationality are brought to trial. Besides the consular jurisdiction, stands that of the mixed tribunals, for the decision of cases between native and foreigner or between foreigners of different nationalities, and the composition of these tribunals is another fruitful source of confusion. The number and distribution of seats, and the appeal to every kind of system of law complicate, to a degree which is exasperating, the branch of administration which is perhaps most important of all in the dealings of practical life, and in which the prime requisites are clear definition beyond the possibility of ambiguity.

We have throughout this work tried to avoid any display of ill-will, and we would not have it thought that we harbour any kind of surreptitious pleasure, in being able to point at the lack of justice in Egypt as a consequence of British maladministration. Such an accusation, though it has frequently been launched against the English, has no foundation whatever in truth. As the English have done their uttermost to simplify and advance the finances of Egypt, they have been strenuous in furthering the better administration of justice, but in this latter case they have met with obstacles which they can neither surmount nor circumvent. And he would be a bold man who would assert that the complex crossing,

intertwining, and consequent semi-anarchy of jurisdiction has been remedied to any perceptible extent. In the meantime, the fact remains, based unfortunately on reliable statistics, that crime in Egypt not only thrives, but for the last few years has been steadily on the increase. The congregation of resident foreigners in Egypt, apart from those employed in some official business, are mostly there for no higher purpose than the accumulation of the maximum of money in the minimum of time. All methods are good so long as they have a substantial pecuniary result. Their one desire is to make a fortune and to make it quickly, and rapid fortunes are usually made at somebody else's expense. Between the conflict of judges and the conflict of laws, these fortune-hunters find room to rob every one with impunity. Their shady practices cannot easily be brought to justice. Between the discrepant codes and the uncertainty of their administration they find a multitude of loopholes for an escape. The one power in Egypt which they have some reason to fear or to respect is England, but in the majority of cases England's false position precludes her from interfering with timely vigour; the evil-doers knowing too well that England lacks authority by which to lay hold of them, profit by this knowledge to the full. And so, year after year, this highly unsatisfactory state of affairs continues; the consular courts act with undue leniency or undue severity, and before the mixed tribunals code fights with code; English law, French law, Mussulman law are mingled together in indescribable confusion; new codes adopted to simplify matters do the very contrary, and from this bewildering maze there seems no prospect of extrication.

One course alone would be possible, and that is the abolition of consular jurisdictions and the setting up of one standard law; but this course involves difficulties innumerable, and whose is the hand which will venture to undertake it? To find a standard law which would meet the requirements of so complex a population would in itself be no easy undertaking. How is a system to be found which will satisfy Egyptians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, Turks, Levantine Jews and Greeks, not to speak of scores of other nationalities? And admitting that such a system is findable, as no doubt it would be, who is commissioned to make the search, and who will get his system accepted once it were found? Even more formidable would be the abandonment of consular jurisdiction.[1]

We have seen that the regulation of financial difficulties presented no such immense difficulties, seeing that the majority of Egyptian bonds repose either in English or French hands, a circumstance which at once reduces the question to an Anglo-French question. With the question of jurisdiction the case is very different.

The rights of justice held by various nations in Egypt repose for their foundation on what are generally known as capitulations; these being treaties between the various individual nations concerned and the Sublime Porte, which is still, as we have shown, regarded as the actual suzerain of Egypt. These treaties, unfortunately, contain a good deal more than a mere delegation

[1] In view of recent proposals to withdraw from the Consular Courts their criminal jurisdiction and hand it over to the protecting Power, it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that though an "*imperium et imperio,*" those Courts are a preservative of the *status quo* whilst Egypt's condition remains provisional, and that, should the Consular Courts be abolished, Egypt could never reach the "autonomy" Lord Cromer himself lately suggested.

upon the part of the Sultan of certain judicial functions; they are, unhappily, complicated by all kinds of intricate clauses, are traversed by all sorts of diplomatic undercurrents, full of avowed or not-avowed diplomatic points, and, indeed, upon them hinge the interests of the various signatories in the Near Eastern Question. Any attempt to touch them on the part of England might bring a whole hornets' nest about her ears, and she is not likely to court any such danger. Yet, without their abolition, any practical solution of the jurisdictional difficulties is unattainable. Even were they abolished, in whom should the concentrated judicial power be vested? Any claim on the part of England to exercise it, would be bound to meet with sharp resistance. The problem is far more complicated than is the financial one, since many nations such as the Italians and Austrians, whose position as bondholders is not important, are from the numbers of their subjects settled in Egypt, deeply interested in the judicial problem.

One cannot contemplate or indulge in the hope that the matter could be satisfactorily or amicably settled by a conference of all concerned; any more than we could look forward to a conference, to bring about the unification of the law, by drawing up a single uniform code, which should be applicable to all cases, and to which all nationalities should be made amenable. Such a conference would have to deal, as is clear, with the toughest of legal problems; would be bound to be disunited upon points of national interest, and would be still further traversed by religious disagreement. Under such circumstances it would be practically foredoomed to failure and uselessness.

The question admits of one solution, and one satisfactory solution alone.

Egypt must take her justice into her own hands, she must beg, or we might rather say, demand her admission into the comity of nations. It is indeed inexplicable why Egypt should so long have been thus rigorously excluded from rights which have been vouchsafed to the negro republic of San Domingo and the diminutive anarchy of San Salvador. Surely Egypt is as capable of dealing out sound justice as are these two states. Her inhabitants are educated and instructed, thanks to her excellent schools—they enjoy, in fine, all the privileges of occidental civilisation. Why, then, are they prohibited from exercising rights which are not even denied to the negro republic?

While we simplified by discussion the other difficulties which complicate and obscure the problem of Egypt's future, we avoided all remarks as to one of the most delicate and intricate points which will have to be settled as a preliminary step to any re-adjustment of the political conditions of Egypt. The matters which we have so far treated have reflected upon Egypt as viewed in the broader light of European politics. We have shown how each of the Great Powers was more or less indifferent to the solution of the Egyptian problem, considering that that solution was not likely to affect the future course of their own development. Of the native Egyptians themselves, we have so far had very little to say, and our silence in this respect must not be construed as meaning that we were uninterested in their destinies, but as an indication of the opinion, which indeed cannot be but universally

recognised, that Egyptian rights will only receive due recognition when it is proved that the assertion of those rights does not in any way run counter to the international interests of Europe.

From the political point of view we have shown that no European Power is directly interested in maintaining the *status quo* in Egypt. We have shown that England would derive no benefit from an occupation which would finally suppress all pretence of Egyptian independence; we have further demonstrated with what inconvenience, and more than inconvenience, the actual anomalous position filled by Great Britain is fraught, and we have gone on to show that an evacuation would be not only consistent with British policy and honour, but would as a matter of fact strengthen the political position of England now rendered so insecure by reason of her false situation.

We now come to the discussion of the financial aspect in which the native Egyptians are very directly concerned; that is to say, that, while we were compelled to disregard their personal interests in the discussion of international politics where they could not make themselves directly felt, when we come to deal with Egyptian finances, we shall be able to take the native interests profitably into account.

We come then, in the first place, to the *Caisse*, but the reader is, no doubt, aware that in consequence of the modifications introduced by the late Treaty with France, the *Caisse* to-day occupies a very different position from that which it occupied a few months ago. In order to illustrate the change which it has undergone we cannot do better than quote the words of the Marquis of Lansdowne, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a

letter to the British Ambassador at Paris, enclosing the Treaty of April 8th, 1904.

He begins with a review of what the English have done of late years in Egypt, and continues: " But while these developments have, in fact, rapidly modified the international situation in Egypt, the financial and administrative system which prevails is a survival of an order of things which no longer exists, and is not only out of date, but full of inconvenience to all concerned. It is based upon the very elaborate and intricate provisions of the Law of Liquidation of 1880, and the London Convention of 1885. With the financial and material improvement of Egypt, these provisions have become a hindrance instead of an aid to the development of the resources of the country. The friction, inconvenience and actual loss to the Egyptian Treasury, which it has occasioned, have been pointed out by Lord Cromer on many occasions in his annual reports. It is well described in the following passage which occurs in Lord Milner's standard work on Egypt."

'The spectacle of Egypt with her Treasury full of money, yet not allowed to use that money for an object, which, on a moderate calculation, should add twenty per cent. to the wealth of the country, is as distressing as it is ludicrous. Every year that passes illustrates more forcibly the injustice of maintaining, in these days of insured solvency, the restrictions imposed upon the financial freedom of the Egyptian Government at a time of bankruptcy—restrictions justifiable then, but wholly unjustifiable now. No one would object to the continuance of the

arrangement by which certain revenues are paid in the first instance to the *Caisse de la Dette.* But so long as these Revenues suffice to cover the interest on the debt, and to provide any sinking fund which the Powers may deem adequate, the balance ought simply to be handed over to the Egyptian Government to deal with it as it pleases, and the antiquated distinction of 'authorized' and 'unauthorized' expenditure should be swept away. No reform is more necessary than this, if the country is to derive the greatest possible benefit from the improved condition of its finances, which has been attained by such severe privations.'

"The functions of the *Caisse*, originally limited to receiving certain assigned revenues on behalf of the bondholders, have in practice become much more extensive. Its members have claimed to control on behalf of the Powers of Europe, the due execution by the Egyptian Government of all the complicated international agreements, regarding the finances of the country. Their assent is necessary before any loan can be used without their sanction; and all assigned revenues are paid directly to them by the collecting departments without passing through the Ministry of Finance. In the same way the receipts of the railways, telegraphs, and port of Alexandria, administered by a Board consisting of three members—an Englishman, a Frenchman, and an Egyptian—are paid, after deduction of expenses, into the *Caisse.*

"The inconvenience of the arrangements which I have described has not been contested by the French Government, and they have shown themselves fully disposed to concert with us the means of bringing the system

of financial administration into more close accord with the facts as they now present themselves."

There could be no clearer statement of the functions assumed by the *Caisse* up to within a few years ago. That it has long persisted in exercising those functions after the slightest justification had disappeared, cannot be denied either. But it is less easy to analyse the part played by England in maintaining the really untenable position of the *Caisse,* unless we again remind the reader of the wider interests of European politics to which we have before referred. It is quite clear that England could not, without at once arousing French hostility, take the administration of the *Caisse* into her own hands. She had at all times shown her desire to avoid making the Egyptian question a question of war with France; under these circumstances, the sole means of putting an end to the vexatious international control, in fine, of reducing the Egyptian question from an international question to one between England, France, and Egypt, or, better still, between England and Egypt, was to allow the Egyptians to free themselves as soon as possible from debt. There can be little doubt that this could have been effected with rapidity, but it also would, at the same time, have deprived England of any plausible *raison d'être* for remaining in Egypt; and as long as France was suspected of designs of supplanting England, it was exceedingly important for England to stay. The inference is clearly that it was not in the political interest of Great Britain to allow Egyptian wealth to increase with too great rapidity. The quotation from Lord Lansdowne has already shown how Egyptian finance was clogged and hampered either by the close-fistedness of the *Caisse*, or by its

constant inquisitorial intermeddling in every nook and corner of Egyptian money matters. But Egyptian progress was compressed by another method which we have already noted cursorily, and to which we shall again come back; this was the upholding of the Turkish tribute. Thus Egypt was annually drained of close upon £750,000 for no conceivable purpose. We cannot believe seriously that this heavy payment was maintained out of mere moral respect for the flimsy bond of suzerainty. The payment was undoubtedly preserved because it directly corresponded with the political interests of Europe. All the Powers were long anxious to remain in Egypt; we have seen that it is the recent change which has come over European politics which has caused their indifference. It has throughout been the English desire, by co-operation with France, to gradually diminish international influence, until the Egyptian question should cease to be an international question at all.

It is the same policy which England has pursued in matters of jurisdiction, and it is by her efforts that the functions of the mixed tribunals have been limited. English initiative brought about the establishment (1884—1889) of the native tribunals, now numbering 46, and having civil jurisdiction in matters which do not involve over £E100, and criminal jurisdiction over offences punishable by fine, or any period of imprisonment up to three years.

It is quite clear that had Egypt been allowed to pursue her course of development without let or hindrance, had she been allowed the full enjoyment and disposal of her finances, without any arbitrary curtailment, she would not long have remained in a

state of indebtedness, which would justify such strict surveillance. There would have been little excuse for keeping her in a state of tutelage, and yet the mistrust felt by each Power towards the other would have made the evacuation exceedingly dangerous for European peace.

Now everything is radically changed.

Again we cannot do better than quote Lord Lansdowne's own statement. "It has," he writes, "long been clear that, in the interests of all parties, it was desirable to introduce very considerable modifications into the international arrangements established in Egypt, for the protection of foreign bondholders." The new Khedivial decree annexed to the Declaration, and accepted by the French Government, will, if it be accepted by the other Powers concerned, have the effect of giving to the Egyptian Government a free hand in the disposal of its own resources, so long as the punctual payment of interest on the debt is assured. The *Caisse de la Dette* will still remain, but its functions will be strictly limited to receiving certain assigned revenues on behalf of the bondholders, and insuring the due payment of the coupon. The *Caisse* will, as soon as the decree has come into operation, have no right and no opportunity of interfering in the general administration of the country. The branches of revenue assigned to the services of the debt have also been changed, and the land tax has been substituted for the customs' duties and railway receipts. This arrangement will give the bondholders the advantage of having their rights secured on the most stable and certain branch of Egyptian revenue, and one which shows a constant tendency to increase. On the other hand, the Egyptian Government will no longer be hampered in the administration of

the customs and railways, and, as a corollary, the mixed administration which has hitherto controlled the railways, telegraphs, and Port of Alexandria will disappear.

The fund derived from the economies of the conversion of 1890, which since that date has been uselessly accumulated in the coffers of the *Caisse,* and which now amounts to £5,500,000, will be handed over to the Egyptian Government who will be free to employ it in whatever way most conduces to the welfare of the people.

Though we still maintain our view as to the right of the Egyptian Government to pay off the whole of their debt at any time after 1905, the French Government have strongly urged the claims of the bondholders to special consideration in view of the past history of the Egyptian Debt. In order to meet their wishes in this matter, the present arrangement provides that the conversion of the Guaranteed and Privileged Debt shall be postponed till 1910, and the conversion of the Unified Debt till 1912, a postponement which confers a very material advantage on the existing bondholders, and should remove all grounds of complaint whenever the conversion is carried through.

The decree abolished various other provisions of the old law which experience has shown to be unnecessary and inconvenient. It will be sufficient to mention the most important of these. In the first place, the consent of the *Caisse* will no longer be necessary in the event of the Egyptian Government desiring to raise further loans for productive expenditure or for other reasons. In the second place, the plan devised in the London Convention of fixing a limit to the

administrative expenditure of the Egyptian Government has been swept away. The manifold inconvenience, and even loss, to which this system has given rise in a country, which is in the process of development, and where, consequently, new administrative needs are constantly making themselves felt, have been frequently pointed out by Lord Cromer."

"Your Excellency will not fail to observe that the Khedivial decree in which these measures are embodied will require the consent of Austria, Germany, Italy and Russia, before it can be promulgated by the Egyptian Government. The amount of the Egyptian Debt held in these countries is, however, quite insignificant, France and Great Britain, indeed, between them hold nearly the whole of the debt, with the exception of the small proportion which is held in Egypt itself.

"In these circumstances it is reasonable to hope that no serious difficulties will be encountered in other quarters regarding proposals which are considered by the two Governments as giving entire satisfaction to the legitimate interests of the bondholders, and which those two Governments are formally pledged to support. Should, however, unexpected obstacles present themselves, we shall, in virtue of our agreement with France, be able to count upon the support of French diplomacy in our endeavours to overcome them."

"It is necessary that I should add a few words as to the other points in which the internal rights of sovereignty of the Egyptian Government are subject to international interferences. These are the consequences

of the system known as that of the capitulations. It comprises the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts and of the mixed tribunals, the latter applying a legislation which requires the consent of all the European Powers, and some extra-European Powers, before it can be modified. In Lord Cromer's opinion, the time is not ripe for any organic change in this direction, and His Majesty's Government have not, therefore, on the present occasion proposed any alterations in this respect. At the same time, whenever Egypt is ready for the introduction of a legislative and judicial system similar to that which exists in other civilised countries, we have sufficient grounds for counting upon French co-operation in effecting the necessary changes."

We have seen, then, what the terms of the new Treaty provide: the *Caisse*, which has hitherto been to all intents and purposes the governing power in Egypt, has been stripped of its prerogative; and it has been recognised that a nation of ten million souls can no longer be submitted to the dominion of a company of bondholders. The services which these latter have rendered in furnishing Egypt with the capital which was essential in order to pull her out of the financial mire into which she had fallen, have been fully recognised. That while Egypt was in a condition of virtual bankruptcy the bondholders should have insisted on practically ruling Egypt, is not made the subject of any complaint. But to-day the case has entirely changed. With organisation introduced into her money affairs and improvements of every kind, Egypt has become a thriving country, and here again Egypt does not desire for a moment to minimise the good which she has received at the hands of

foreign capitalists. But now, for a long period of years interest has been regularly paid. Egyptian revenue has gone on rising, and it is plain that the bondholders cannot any longer esteem themselves in a hazardous position, as various conversions, especially of 1890, have fully proved. By no excuse is their interference in the general government of Egypt justifiable. The Khedivial Decree gives them ample security for the regular payment of the interests due to them, but at the same time insists upon the *Caisse* being reduced to a strictly limited department of the State, and there seems little prospect of the Khedivial Decree, which has already met with German assent, meeting with any opposition. With its promulgation the *Caisse* will cease to be the ruler of Egypt.

By the Treaty of April 8th, 1904, France makes the completest abdication of her interests, and the one Power whose competition England has so far had seriously to fear, has thus been removed. France's representative, it is true, will still continue to sit upon the Board controlling the *Caisse*, but he is pledged to say and do nothing in any way prejudicial to English interest. The other international representatives England has no need to dread, as we have seen that their various Governments will not permit themselves to be drawn into any serious dispute upon Egyptian matters.

From the above considerations we cannot fail to see that the Egyptian question has undergone, in consequence of the Treaty of April 8th, 1904, a change as radical in nature as that which it suffered by the occupation of 1882; in 1882 France virtually abdicated her interests, to-day she has done so in the most formal and categorical manner.

But this change is susceptible of divers interpretations, and yet, upon a thorough understanding of what it means, depends the correctness of all our forecastings of the ultimate destiny of Egypt.

To the Jingo mind, the change has one feature which is so overpoweringly prominent as to render for him at least all other aspects of the case indifferent. He sees the abdication of France alone, and thinking, as he does, the unwillingness to risk a conflict with France has alone prevented England from finally consolidating her hold upon Egypt, he imagines that now, the one serious rival being removed, England will no longer make a secret of her policy, but politely or brusquely setting other international factors aside, will grasp the longed-for prize. Apart from the fact that England has expressly disclaimed any such intention, and apart from the fact that annexation is, as we have shown, of no likely advantage to England, a matter which has doubtless long been clear to those who hold the helm of British affairs, apart from all this we would have it remarked that the Jingo's interpretation supremely ignores the native element.

CHAPTER V

THE EGYPTIANS AND THE NEUTRALISATION OF EGYPT

TWENTY years ago, if not indeed with less injustice, it may at all events have been possible to ignore the native with less danger. But the Egypt of to-day is profoundly modified. Two decades of foreign but not despotic rule have allowed the idea of Egyptian nationality to grow, and to-day the Egyptians recognise that they too have a national vocation. The higher classes have all undergone a thorough education, and have keenly entered into and absorbed the spirit of Western civilisation; but they have drunk in that spirit in no servile fashion; while they have the deepest admiration for all the best elements of what is European, with which the majority have come into contact during college life in such towns as Marseilles, Nîmes, or Paris, they are fully convinced that their own country is called upon to play its own *rôle* as an organic and independent unit of the European whole. They feel that they have outgrown tutelage. It would be more than foolish to shut one's eyes to the growth of this sentiment, and we are bound to recognise that a people activated by it might not be quite willing spectators of the permanent establishment of British rule over them.

We have mentioned the word "organic," and we would not have the reader imagine that we have called it into

service as a pleasant-sounding epithet of no very definite significance. At the same time we have no desire to become dogmatic, and to drag the reader into long and vague disquisitions smacking of school essays and pedantry; nevertheless we must ask him for a moment to bear with us, while we explain what meaning we attach to the word "organic," when we apply it to a European nation.

Perhaps the most concise method is to take a parallel from physiology. Readers have doubtless heard of the many experiments which have been made upon the auditory and ocular nerves, and know also that while the tissue, construction, and chemical reaction of those nerves themselves are very nearly identical, nevertheless, the auditory nerve is incapable of seeing and the ocular nerve cannot be made to hear. When we speak, then, of these nerves being organic, we mean that each nerve can perform only its own particular function and cannot by any ingenuity or force be brought to discharge any other function.

Let us transfer our observations to European history, and we shall discover that it is built up also of a number of organic unities, each designed to perform its appropriate function, and incapable of performing any other. This is a fact which explains the utter breakdown of all attempts to establish an imperial *régime* in Europe, by which several distinct national and organic units should be absorbed; of these failures we shall later have more to say.

When we assert a State to be organic, it comes very much to the same thing as saying that it has passed beyond the stage at which it could be reckoned as a mere parcel of territory, a mere geographical expression.

The State has become a living unit capable of pursuing a particular course of development and incapable of being reduced to follow any other. It is endowed with political, artistic, social potentialities, which may be for some time checked by the application of external force, but cannot be extinguished. The power which endeavours to divert or suppress a nation in its course of organic development, is bound in the long run itself to succumb. The history of Europe is the history of some two and a half score of these irreducible unities. We have numberless instances in which some particular nation has for centuries been ground by foreign despotism, for centuries every effort has been made to crush out its national characteristics, to absorb it into the nationality of the conqueror, but in no instance do we read of any nation being finally reduced. As soon as the foreign hold is slackened, either from stress of war, or from internal convulsions, the depressed nationality reasserts itself with redoubled vigour. Traits of nationality which it was thought had long ago been thoroughly extinguished, reappear with all and more than their pristine force. Perhaps the history of the Balkan Peninsula supplies us with some of the most remarkable and interesting examples. There can be no doubt of the thoroughness of the manner in which the Turks occupied their European provinces. The Osmanlis are a warlike nation, and in the Balkans they came into contact with a number of small nationalities as warlike as themselves. The methods employed by the Turks in reducing them were anything but merciful, and it was only through the overwhelming military superiority of the Turks, with their organised masses of fanatical janissaries, that these methods proved temporarily

successful. For centuries the Turks were employed in strengthening their hold over the conquered territories and in deleting all traces of non-Turkish nationality. But beneath the surface of apparent indifference the vanquished nations were really becoming more pronounced and more sharply defined than ever, so that after the successive defeats of the conqueror, we see them again emerge more distinctly national than ever. It is thus that the Turkish dominion is bound finally to collapse. It is built up against the dictates of nature, and every successive diminution which it suffers, means nothing more really than the reappearance of a national unity long held latent by sheer might and terror, but bound, as soon as the favourable moment arises, to claim its right to separate and independent existence. We need not then be surprised that the decline of Turkish power is not marked by the increase of the territory of the surrounding Great Powers, but by the re-engraving on the map of Eastern Europe of names of nations long half forgotten, but which, if after centuries of indocile subjection they have at last escaped the yoke of Turkey, are not likely willingly to bow to the European Powers who have been instrumental in their deliverance. Turkey, it must be remembered, has had yet another difficulty to face in her conquests; she has been thwarted by conflict of religion, and the irreconcilability of Christianity and Mahometanism has done much to invigorate the already strong sense of national disparity. When studied in the light of what we have said, nothing can be more interesting than the history of Roumanian, Bulgarian, Servian and Rumelian independence.

There are many other States in Europe, far more minute than the Balkan Independencies, which have

succeeded in maintaining their nationality unimpaired. We need only remind the reader of the exiguity of San Marino which claims to be the most ancient State of Europe, the miniature Pyrenean Republic of Andorra with its 6000 souls, the tiny Dalmatian Montenegro which has defied all attempts to absorb it.

It is this composition of organic unities which makes the history of Europe so absolutely dissimilar from the history of any other part of the world. The word "organic" gives us the key to the profound abyss which separates a small European unity like Servia, from an Asiatic country like Thibet. All the forces of Turkey would be unable to extinguish Servian nationality, whilst a comparatively insignificant column of British and Native Indian troops is highly unlikely to encounter any insuperable resistance in the annexation and absorption of Thibet.

Europe, and England above all, can no longer afford to imagine that Egypt stands to-day upon the level of Thibet; generations of training in European ways of thinking have so thoroughly permeated the mind of the Egyptian, that he is completely Europeanised, in the sense that he is thoroughly conscious of his own nationality.

The late war in South Africa has inwardly convinced every Englishman of the fact, that a nation after the European model can only be partially extinguished at the expense of millions in money, and many thousands in lives. And yet, should the matter come to a trial of arms, we would have the reader assured that Egypt would offer very distinct difficulties from those offered by the South African Republics. For the moment we leave military considerations entirely out of the

question, and imagine ourselves to have reached the conclusion of a war successful to Great Britain, and that the moment has come for drawing up the terms of peace. It is clear that England having recognised the existence of a strongly-defined Egyptian nationality, would not assert her right to rule by main force, as she would know that such a domination could only be peacefully maintained while the vanquished were recuperating their energies for a fresh struggle. Great Britain has never pursued a policy of such narrow Imperialism. She has never endeavoured to rule by terrorism, but, after victory, has invariably endeavoured to conciliate the vanquished by raising him in his own self-respect. It was thus from the very day of the peace of Vereeniging, that she explicity indicated the lines which she intended to pursue. The Boers were given to understand that the bestowal upon them of representative government was only subject to their good behaviour during a certain epoch of probation. After that period had been satisfactorily passed, they would in fact become as it were federal members of the British Empire. They would occupy the same position towards England as do Australia and Canada, practically entire autonomy within, and only subject in the sense that their foreign relations would be managed by Great Britain. Whether this end might not have been achieved at less expense is not for us here to discuss. We now suppose that England is about to conclude peace with Egypt, and recognising the marked nationality of Egypt, she is also desirous of admitting her as it were upon federal terms into the British Empire. What can she offer her in compensation for the extinction of her independence? Autonomy within?

But how? It would certainly be futile to offer Egypt the benefit of representative institutions at home, which she would certainly neither understand, nor care to understand. The Egyptian mind is still oriental enough to have no comprehension of representative government. It is true that Egypt possesses to-day an upper and a lower house, but the representative constitution is a mere empty and inanimate phantom of the real thing. Countries have the *régime* which becomes them, and statesmen have long since renounced the idea that a country can be fitted with a constitution much as a human being may be fitted with a suit of clothes. It is all very well to offer the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony the benefit of representative government since those countries in independence have shown their capacity to understand and use such a constitution, and its bestowal upon them may eventually prove a bond of amity; but what would be the use of making such an offer to Egypt, which has long since shown that representative institutions are a matter of supreme indifference to her? Representative government would prove no balm to soothe the galling yoke of foreign domination, nor would it ever hinder the Egyptians from renewing the struggle for freedom as soon as they felt their forces equal to the attempt.

But we have perhaps carried our hypothesis somewhat too far. We must remember the date 1912, which may have great importance for Egyptian history. The reader will recall the passage from Lord Lansdowne's dispatch in which he refers to the power which the Egyptians possess after that year of paying off, practically speaking, the whole of their debt. There is no great improbability that they will avail themselves of this

power. Egypt is to-day rich enough to redeem its own debt; it could at all events effect, with its present credit, a conversion which would yet further reduce the rate of interest and considerably add to the Egyptian economies. If the Egyptians do not entirely buy in their bonds, they could at any rate so reduce the amount of their indebtedness, as to change completely their position with regard to Europe. Let us imagine them, as we very legitimately may, redeeming a large proportion of their debt. We cannot see any patent improbability in their coming there-after to the British Government, or to its representative in Egypt, and handing him a very politely-worded petition, the gist whereof would be somewhat as follows:—'We are deeply sensible of the good offices of the British Government, and we have no desire either to minimise the magnitude of its services towards us in bringing order into our administration, and helping us to secure our frontiers from invasion, or to conceal the gratitude which we feel for those services. We are sensible to the fact that the British Government has at no period endeavoured to undermine Egyptian nationality, and we have throughout regarded the British occupation in the light of a beneficent tutelage, seeing that whereas the British have in the meantime derived no direct benefit from Egypt, either in money or forces, Egypt has, on the other hand, steadily progressed towards complete prosperity. Convinced therefore of the cordial feelings of the British toward us, we venture to remind them, that during the period of their protection and of our consequent welfare, we consider that we have progressed constantly towards that moment when we can take the government of our country into our own hands. We

have now freed ourselves from the major portion of our burden of debt, the thriving condition of our country and of its finances affords ample security for the payment of interest upon and final repayment of the outstanding debts. While renewing the assurance of our gratitude, we at the same time venture to suggest that the moment has arrived when the British may with advantage, both to Great Britain and Egypt, set an end to their Occupation and leave Egypt to carry on her own government in complete independence. In presenting this petition we at the same time desire to inform the British Government that we have no wish or intention to deny the complete nature of the sovereignty enjoyed by the British in the Soudan, neither are we desirous in any way of subverting or diminishing that sovereignty.'

Should the Egyptians present a petition of the above description, stating the true state of affairs and carefully worded, so as to avoid the slightest suspicion of offence, it would be very hard for the British statesmen to take umbrage, and one can not well see how they could return anything but a favourable response. Before the Treaty of April 8th, 1904, things might have been different; it would then not have been difficult to make the British public discover a French intrigue—under the very innocent aspect of the petition; to-day, that would be no longer possible. There cannot be the faintest suspicion of the French plotting in Egypt to subvert the power of England; there is not the slightest reason for doubting the entire sincerity of the French abdication in Egypt. We have seen that the withdrawal of France is not only consonant with the general lines of French foreign policy, but that it has also been paid for at a very serious

consideration. Under the circumstances, it does not seem likely that the British lion could be goaded into thinking the petition an attack upon his Imperial preserves; he would see that he had nothing to lose, and everything to gain, in acceding to the Egyptian requests.

A war with Egypt might expand into something much more formidable than at first glance would seem likely; but even were the war waged by the English with success, it could not in the end promote English interests; in the meantime the Egyptian trade would be ruined, and the English financial position in Egypt completely wrecked. As we have seen that England has always interpreted her Imperial vocation in a liberal manner, the upshot of a successful war, apart from impoverishment of both parties, would be simply to bring back the same state of affairs with which it had begun. England would certainly win no broader commercial rights, than she would possess were Egypt an independent country open to free trade. If England had at any time carried on her Imperialism upon French lines, and had ever incorporated her conquests into the Empire, as entirely subservient provinces, a war might possibly have some *raison d'être*, although even then the probable expense would need a careful balancing against the probable advantages. But since England has always granted her subjects, wherever they were capable of profiting by them, free internal institutions, it is impossible to see in what manner England would be more advanced after than before a war. The same remarks apply to the present situation in South Africa, and the British public is no longer likely to subscribe funds with alacrity to procure so meagre a result.

Should the refusal of such a petition lead to an open rupture with Egypt, it would be rash to predict the outcome of the war. It is not easy to see what course Egypt would pursue, nor is it easy to see the amount of forces she could bring into the field. We may very shrewdly assume that she would not be long in attempting to induce Abyssinia to unite with her, and it is very possible that she would not be speaking to deaf ears. The Abyssinians could not fail to recognise that the subjection of Egypt would mean, if not the forcible annexation of their country, at least its reduction to virtual dependence, but as they would be girt on all sides by British territory they would be helpless to resist. Moreover, the Abyssinians have little love for Europeans of any description since the day of Adowa, and, indeed, not over much respect. Whether the Egyptians might not again rouse into vitality the now dormant forces of Mahdism, is also a question. All these are possibilities into the discussion of which it is not our wish here to enter. We would only roughly indicate that an Anglo-Egyptian war might present difficulties which, even if they might be overcome in the end, would entail an expenditure quite disproportionate to the results which would finally be attained.

The task which we had set ourselves in the beginning is approaching completion; we have discussed the question of Egypt from every conceivable standpoint; we have weighed the importance of Egypt as a factor in the broader field of European politics; we have examined the condition of affairs which has been brought about by the present occupation, and while fully recognising the advantages which Egypt has undeniably derived

from a period of quasi-protection by Great Britain, we have indicated the insuperable difficulties which render impossible the prolonged continuance of the actual state of things. We have throughout endeavoured to use the strictest impartiality, and have in every case dealt with the various issues from the pure point of view of political advantage and disadvantage, avoiding the catchwords of moral right or wrong, which cannot but obscure an entirely political discussion.

Our investigations, from whichever point they first started, have invariably led us to the same result. The Egyptian problem admits of one permanently satisfactory solution alone; one solution, which, tallying as it does with the interests of all parties concerned, promises to be of firm standing and long duration. We have seen that one of the principal difficulties which render the present state of Egypt almost intolerable, is the conflict of jurisdictions; we have shown that no European power can set an end to this constant source of vexation which most undoubtedly clogs the otherwise brilliant economical progress of Egypt. International jealousies utterly preclude the notion that the numerous Powers would agree to resign their privileges of consular jurisdiction into the hands of England, and England is not even likely to incur the odium of making such a proposition. We have also pointed out the illogical nature of the position which excludes Egypt from the comity of nations while it admits other countries, which are certainly not upon the same level of civilisation or are equally strangers to the Christian faith. We cannot imagine that Egypt would not readily obtain her admittance if she expressed her desire to be received, but we are certain that the request must come from

Egypt as an independent nation, and not through the intermediary of Great Britain.

But we would insist above all upon our final argument, namely, that Egypt has attained the stage when we can no longer shut our eyes to the fact that she has become an organic member of Europe. We have shown that if she has once attained this stage of development, no power can divert her from following out the natural course of that development. Nobody who is familiar with native circles in Egypt can in his heart of hearts deny that the country has in truth awakened to its national vocation, nor can he refuse to recognise the rapidity with which that feeling is gaining ground.

It is quite possible that the Egyptians are not yet so thoroughly permeated and imbued with the sense of their right to a separate national existence, as to be willing at present to assert that right at any cost; but there can be little doubt that the passing of years and the sharpening of the actual sentiment, is bound in course of time to lead to such a resolute frame of mind. The true statecraft takes time by the forelock, and does not wait until it is driven into a disagreeable corner, in order then to find some way out of it as best it can; on the contrary, it looks sufficiently into the future to see what is bound to come and lays its plans accordingly.

We have shown by the employment of the most convincing arguments that politics permit, that the present occupation of Egypt by the British retards Egyptian progress as much as it has hitherto furthered it, and that it has by the abdication of France lost whatever political *raison d'être* it ever possessed. We have shown that the conversion of the occupation into an annexation would be positively prejudicial to British

interest, even could it be carried out with success, and we have pointed out the very considerable advantages which the British would secure by their withdrawal from a false position growing every day more untenable.

It would seem that the moment has come when the British retirement could be effected with the greatest advantage to England herself, and when that retirement, clearly executed without any pressure, would be an irrefutable testimony to the disinterested motives of the British occupation.

We shall in the remainder of the present chapter indicate the lines on which the future position of Egypt might be regulated. We shall show that questions similar in many respects to the Egyptian question have already occurred, and we shall describe the manner in which they have been settled. We may then be able to deduce a kind of general principle which we can apply to the particular case with which we have here to deal.

Our treatment is necessarily historical, and we need, therefore, hardly crave the reader's pardon for presenting him with a rather large amount of historical data; they form the only material upon which he can base a solid conclusion. The mere barren statement of abstract principles must necessarily fail to be convincing. We are particularly anxious to show with the utmost clearness, that the solutions which similar European problems have received have been the only possible solutions; that they were not founded on academic reasoning, but were the product of political necessity; and finally, that these solutions have been found completely satisfactory in their subsequent working.

At the first glance, the field of European history

appears as such a maze of complicated and conflicting elements that the observer can scarcely refrain from giving utterance to his feeling of despair; it would seem impossible to find any rhyme or reason; there seems to be no standard according to which one may say that this thing is important and that thing is negligible. But, gradually, as the historical eyesight grows stronger, a kind of perspective begins to make itself visible. Minor interests and minor agents fade into a harmonious background, against which the prime movers stand forth in bold and decisive relief. One begins to see that, as a rule, only some two or three prominent figures need be really taken into account, and that their mutual attraction or repulsion will account for the changes of position which are constantly observable among the less important elements.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards, these pre-eminent figures are those of France, Germany (that is to say, the Empire) and Spain. Later, Russia begins to make its interest felt. It is singular that, despite the ceaselessly-varying combinations in which these Powers appear, their number is never diminished. They are constantly at war, for they are all animated by mutually irreconcilable ambitions. At one time France is leagued with Spain against the Empire, at another it is the Empire and Spain that are pitted against France; but although in either case it might have been imagined that the isolated member was bound sooner or later to succumb, nothing of the kind occurs. At no time, therefore, has any one of the greater factors of European history seen its efforts rewarded with the complete fulfilment of its ambitions. Accordingly, sooner or later peace was bound to come,

both belligerent parties being reduced to a state of utter exhaustion, which demanded, at least for the moment, that the struggle should be suspended. It would, nevertheless, have been impossible to have left one of the warring parties in possession of the object of dispute. The interests for which they fought were too vital to admit even of temporary concession. This being the state of affairs, it might have been imagined that European wars would forcedly continue until the absolute annihilation of one of the rivals; but such a resolution was equally impossible; no one great Power of Europe has ever succeeded in completely suppressing another. One way of solving the matter alone remained open, and that was that both parties should forego the prize which neither could hold with the safety of the other. Thus it has come about that the Europe of to-day is studded with a number of dead points; they are, as it were, the centres of calm about which the cyclones of European history revolve and rage almost incessantly.

Between practically all the great Powers of contemporary Europe will be found inserted zones of neutral territory, which, besides keeping those Powers from the constant friction which would of necessity ensue did they come into contact along the whole edge of their territories, contain as a rule strategic points which, if held by one Power, would keep its neighbour in a state of continual insecurity. Desperate wars have been generally waged to secure these points, but finally, after vast outpourings of treasure and blood, both sides, convinced of the impossibility of either party being able to win and permanently maintain them, have deemed it best to settle the unending debate of arms

by compromise. The history of Europe is marked by as many great compromises as great wars.

Let us take one or two salient examples.

Consider, for instance, the whole policy of France from the opening of the sixteenth century to the signing of the Treaty of Vienna (1815). It has one unalterable objective; the idea which guides all French statesmen, the idea which dominated throughout the policy of Louis XIV. France is to be made to extend to her natural boundaries, the frontier which Cæsar gave her; she is to be limited by the Rhine. The task, if we look at the map, would not appear to be excessively arduous. The breadth of territory necessary for its accomplishment is not so extensive. And yet three centuries of strenuous effort did not witness the realisation of the project. It was not for want of talent, for during that period France had the most brilliant of statesmen at her helm—such men as Richelieu and Mazarin; her diplomacy became the model of all European diplomacy, in which we can trace even to-day the mind and language of such men as President Jeannin, D'Avaux and Lionne. We need not speak of the perfection to which France carried her military organisation, the military terminology of the day of Louis XIV is still that employed in every European army; nor need we give a list of her brilliant generals, among whom the names of the Great Condé, Luxembourg, Villars, Catinat, Vendôme, etc., are well known to all students. Yet with all this talent, backed up by a lavish expenditure of life and money, the entire Rhine limit could never be permanently won. The frontier was driven forward to touch it at one point only to be drawn back from another. And no termination to the perpetual struggle seemed possible.

The periodical intervals of peace were but breathing spaces. For it was impossible for France to remain satisfied with a merely arbitrary frontier, which could at any time be overstepped by powerful enemies beyond. And so the internecine conflict continued with varying success and unending misery to the unhappy land which formed the seat of war, a land naturally rich, but rendered barren and unprofitable by the ceaseless passing and repassing of armies. No anti-French coalition was powerful enough to crush France into abandoning her design, and no defeat of anti-French coalitions was so thorough as to prevent their rapid renovation. Even the genius of Napoleon only succeeded in securing the disputed territory for a short time. In 1810 the whole of Belgium and Holland were French; but all this was permanently undone by the allies in 1814 and 1815.

It is only since 1831 that the problem has been finally solved. Now-a-days it would be more impossible than ever for France and Germany to have long stretches of contiguous frontier. The existence of buffer-states has never been more in demand than at present. In 1831, under the guarantee of the five Great Powers (Austria, England, France, Russia and Prussia), Belgium was converted into a *neutral* State, and one broad road of invasion into France was closed; this neutralisation was finally ratified and acceded to by Holland in 1839; later, in 1867, the same Powers, with the addition of Italy, agreed to neutralise the Duchy of Luxembourg, and yet another stretch of frontier was armoured against attack; in addition Holland, though not formally, is yet *de facto* neutralised, as any menace to its integrity has been declared a *casus belli* by Great Britain.

What has occurred on the northern French frontier has occurred elsewhere. About Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg are situated Germany, France and England; and it will be found that everywhere else where three Great Powers meet, it has been found necessary to create a neutral dead point, without which European peace would not for one instant be secure. What this neutralisation implies we must show later on.

Another remarkable dead point in Europe is Switzerland—practically neutralised since the middle of the seventeenth century, although that neutrality was frequently violated, but definitively confirmed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Thus Germany, France and Italy are held asunder. That this neutrality is of no illusory kind is shown by the prompt manner in which Bourbaki with his remnant of the French army (1871) was compelled to lay down arms on crossing the Swiss frontier. But perhaps even more interesting is the fact that France and Italy are still further protected from collision by the neutralisation of portions of Savoy.

By the death of Charles II and the accession of the House of Bourbon in Spain the long union which had united the Crowns of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire upon the heads of the Habsburgs was broken, and henceforth the two countries were at enmity one with another. Their natural point of collision was in the north of Italy, where the Italian apanages of the Spanish Crown lay open to Imperial attack, and whence, again, it was possible for the Spanish to deal a blow at the Empire. But even as in the struggle between France and the Empire in the North we have seen that neither side was

able to make itself master of the intermediate territories of Belgium and Holland, so between the Empire and Spain in the South neither party was strong enough to assert its lasting supremacy in the north of Italy. The consequences are in both cases strikingly similar. We have seen what occurred in the northern case; in Italy the contest also ended in compromise. Another dead point was formed between Spain and Empire; the neutral Republic of Venice, whose territories intervened between the two combatants, and included within its limits the important strategic points which could not safely be occupied by either of the belligerent parties.

Especially interesting with regard to our present subject is the proposed neutralisation of Denmark, which has long been agitated, and is very likely to be put into execution. Denmark, commanding as it does the entrance to the Baltic, and forming a powerful strategic base for operations against what we may call the back entrance to the Baltic, namely, the Kiel Canal—Denmark may be, as long as it remains capable of playing a *rôle* of its own, a source of danger to Germany. Any Power which can induce Denmark to join its alliance, at once commands the passage through the Kattegat, is within striking distance of the Kiel Canal, and menaces to sever Germany's naval lines of communication between the North Sea and Baltic. On the other hand, should Germany compel Denmark to join her, she at once, granted her naval strength is sufficient, makes the Baltic a closed sea. To all parties concerned, the neutralisation of Denmark would present advantages. Denmark herself would be freed from the perilous position in which she now stands, and Germany,

although she could no longer close the Baltic save by the decision of a naval battle, would no longer run the risk of finding herself excluded from the Baltic or cooped up within it. Denmark as a neutral Power would form the logical sequence of the Luxembourg-Belgium-Holland line of neutrality, and would form a wad to deaden the concussion of Russia, England and Germany. It has also been proposed to neutralise Sweden and Norway, but, though the projects have been favourably entertained in the respective Parliaments of those countries, the matter would require reference to a general European Congress. We shall point out that where so important a passage exists as the Suez Canal, itself, of course, neutralised, the only way to secure its complete neutrality is to render the neighbouring country innocuous.

The Egyptian question threatens to reproduce itself in Central America, and there it is already casting its shadow before. That the construction of a Central American Canal has so long been retarded, has a very simple explanation on financial grounds, but it is quite certain that the next few years will witness the realisation of the project. Whether the plan of carrying the canal from Colon to Panama, or the Nicaraguan scheme finally wins the day, is immaterial. The resulting political situation will be the same. The isthmus will become the centre upon which all the streams of oriental and occidental commerce will converge, and it will consequently be one of the most important if not the most important political point of the globe. It is quite clear that the Powers will insist upon the canal being neutral. To allow the United States to hold the keys of the major part of European commerce would be out of the

question, and if the United States are to be hindered from becoming at least virtual masters of those keys, they must at all costs be prevented from acquiring the territory immediately commanding the canal. There is only one means of prevention, and that is the neutralisation of the countries through which the canal will pass, whether those countries be Nicaragua and Costa Rica or Columbia. That they should be permitted to continue in a state of free and untrammelled independence is clearly impossible. Such an independence would undoubtedly lead very shortly to their own undoing. As independent, unneutralised states they would become the focus of constant intrigue, and no Power could be permitted to exercise undue influence over them without imperilling all others. Such a state of affairs would inevitably and in no long time lead to war. Even now the unceasing intestine struggles and revolutions of which the Central States are already the scene, are a faint glimmer of the flames which would break forth when once the canalisation has become an accomplished fact. The state of unrest is without doubt fomented by outside influence. The little republics are like the heirs to a great fortune, fondled, flattered, and cajoled by those who wish to profit by their windfall. This unending intrigue leading to ever fresh revolutions, ruining the republics, which it robs of all financial or commercial stability, cannot be permitted much longer to endure. Sooner or later it would form the pretext for interference either by the United States or some other Great Power, and the neutrality of the canal would become jeopardised. With the neutralisation of the States and their consequent removal from the sphere of

legitimate foreign intrigue, would vanish probably all trace of internal dissension, the small States would be able to enjoy in peace and growing prosperity the fortune to which their geographical position has predestined them.

We have spoken of neutrality in Europe and America, and we shall now pass on to see how the same solution of the African problem has forced itself upon politicians since 1888, when the initiative was given by Prince Bismarck, and the cry for a partitioning of the African continent became louder and louder. The Powers, keenly conscious of the tremendous sacrifices which the struggles for Asiatic and American dominion had entailed upon them in the eighteenth century, and anxious to avoid any renewal of such a ruinous drain upon their population and resources, came to the conclusion that a very considerable portion of the great African Continent would have to be firmly and formally excluded from the partition. By this means alone could the otherwise inevitable collision of the conflicting interests of the partitioning Powers be avoided. The consequence was that a vast stretch of central African territory was neutralised, and thus set beyond the reach of empire builders. The Congo Free State, to which we of course refer, and which surpasses in extent the whole of British South Africa (exclusive of Rhodesia), was not only neutralised but was also entrusted to the care of the politically least important of European middle states, namely Belgium, which latter kingdom is itself neutralised.

There could be no clearer proof of the general

principle of neutralisation, and it is superfluous to show that whatever may now be the case, very shortly questions of the utmost importance must arise involving the south-eastern corner of Europe. The Turkish problem must soon be solved. Russia is already reputed to have secured the better part of Persia, and the rush for Mesopotamia and the Euphrates valley has already begun. Who is to possess Asia Minor is a matter of life interest to Italy, Germany, and all the Christian Balkan States. In no long space of time we shall undoubtedly see reproduced in the south-east of Europe the same position with like factors which for centuries vexed the north-west. Howsoever the position may be finally disposed of, two things are absolutely certain. Firstly, that in this new struggle, as in every other struggle, the Powers will come to see that dead points must be created, and that a large portion of the debated territory will have to be made neutral. What more useful territory could be neutralised than Egypt?

In the struggle England will certainly be deeply concerned. Unless blinded by jingoistic fever and total neglect of the plain teachings of European history in the last three hundred years, one cannot but admit that in the great conflict arising from the near Eastern question, England would derive the most substantial advantage from the neutralisation of Egypt. Any reduction of the vulnerable points of an empire straggling over all the latitudes and in every part of the globe is in itself of the utmost importance. An emancipated Egypt would naturally, if within the bounds of neutrality, do a good many things that otherwise it would feel too indifferent or too hostile

to accomplish. Statesmen have long learned the value of benevolent neutrality. Unhampered, nay, abetted by Egypt, England would have even more freedom of action in any emergency of the near Eastern problem than has either Germany, Austria-Hungary, or Italy.

ULTIMATE CONSIDERATIONS

We have reached the furthest limit of our task; but before we take leave of the reader, we would speak a word or two with him, if not in a more serious, yet in a more solemn tone. Hitherto we have dealt with matters in the most dry and matter-of-fact of fashions; we have carefully balanced advantage against disadvantage, we have as it were drawn up the profit and loss account of Egypt's history; we have endeavoured to see in the most business-like and unemotional manner how far the mode of carrying on Egyptian affairs in the past has met with success, and what doubts there are as to whether the continuance of the same methods will bring success in the future. In our eyes, our readers have been politicians, and we have sought to forget awhile that they were human beings. We have advanced arguments, unflavoured by any moral reflections, as being most likely to convince the politician. Before laying aside the pen and submitting ourselves to the reader's verdict, we would address him a moment in a somewhat loftier strain.

We shall be drawn into speaking of religions and beliefs, and we are fully conscious that we tread on tender ground. A man is very rightly incensed at hearing his belief belittled or denied. Such intentions

are far from us, but we know that even the most skilful surgeon with the deftest touch is nevertheless unwittingly liable to cause pain. It is anything but our desire to be incriminating. The reader will admit that we have persistently shrunk from handling our topic in a manner which might be construed as recriminatory or reproachful.

If we have always made use of cut-and-dry, matter-of-fact arguments, we would not have it believed that we see nothing more in the future of a country than the skilful playing of a hand of political cards. Politicians are no doubt forced to proceed thus, but as a rule there stands behind the politician Public Opinion, that can continue or cancel his commission as it wills. Public Opinion does not always neglect to take a higher view of contemporary history than that inspired by lust of gain and profit.

He who would see far ahead along the path of future history must climb to some higher pinnacle. We would for awhile quit the consideration of Egypt in order to meditate upon what conditions depends the future welfare of the whole vast African continent with its native inhabitants. Now we must consider Egypt, not by itself, nor in her relation to Europe, but as part of a vast continent. It is now-a-days an acknowledged rule that the real statesman must begin to think in continents.

Are we not to take it as a sign that Providence still holds the many races of Africa in a period of probation, and that she does not yet think them prepared to receive the light of Christianity, when we remark that as yet the European efforts to convert them have been so little successful? We leave the reader to answer the

question as he thinks best, and content ourselves with the facts. It cannot be denied that as yet Christian missionary effort in Africa has been abortive. And yet the majority of the natives of the Dark Continent are not Pagan.

Throughout the centre and north of Africa, we can see the deep impress of the Mahometan religion. Where the Christian fails, the Mahometan still succeeds. There is something in this creed which appeals irresistibly to the mind of the African native, and it is by the Mahometan alone that he can be won to conversion. Need we perhaps wonder that when Europe was not given the light of Christianity until it had passed through the mill of Greco-Roman civilisation, that Providence does not yet find the native African sufficiently prepared? Of all the European nations that have settled in Africa in a body, the Boers certainly have proved themselves to be endowed with the greatest adaptability to African climate and surroundings. Yet even this remarkable people, the Dutch Boers, has always failed to enter into sympathy with the native, and it must indeed be admitted that Christian missionary work throughout the extra-European world has proved signally unsuccessful.

But where the Christian Faith fails to penetrate, civilisation can only with the utmost difficulty win a footing.

Up to this day the black races of Africa can not be said to have learned anything from Europe that is profitable to them, or that has advanced them on the road of civilisation. The white man has come to further his own gain, and where he has passed he has left desolation. Between the white invaders and the native there exists a barrier which nothing can level. Sooner

or later this repugnance leads to the extermination of the native.

It is to be earnestly hoped that the Europe of to-day is not going to repeat again the tragedy of American Colonisation. The history of the conquest of America would make the most stony-hearted sick with horror. There again Europeans failed to discover any link of sympathy with the primeval inhabitants. The faith which was carried into the land at the point of the sword won no adherents; in America, if the truth be told, there was hardly the glimmer of a desire to turn the native to Christianity or better him in any way. Had the attempt been made, it might perhaps have been unavailing, but the attempt was not made—with ruthless hand the white invader swept all before him; north and south he butchered as if he revelled in sheer delight of butchery, and when the wretched native, cowed into submission, sued for peace, he was even more thoroughly rooted out by the spread of European pestilences. No mercy was shown to the Indian, no quarter if he stood in the way of the white man's cupidity. So thoroughly was the work of extermination carried on, that to-day the remnants of the indigenous races are either to be found as curiosities, with difficulty preserved in Indian Reservations, or as debased and timorous tribes who have found their last repose in the impenetrable interior of the South American Continent.

We shudder to think that the same ghastly process should be once more renewed in Africa, and yet we cannot but see that here, too, the white man and the black are irreconcilable. The nature of the black is so thoroughly foreign to the European colonist, that the latter will never succeed in grafting the faith or civilisation of Christendom

upon him. Already we have seen the failures; already South Africa is half desolate. Tales from the Equatorial Zone, which one is loath and ashamed to believe, unhappily receive daily confirmation. The European set down in these torrid regions, with, alas! little distinction of nationality, rapidly degenerates. The brutal side of his character alone survives. He looks upon the native as the means of satisfying his lust, cupidity or savagery. Week by week, the mails bring darker stories, and occasionally some great offender is brought to book, and all Europe shudders at the perusal of the ghastly train of crimes.

Along the northern coast of Africa, we have another signal instance of the incapacity of the European to absorb the native, or to draw him within the range of European civilisation. Here the French, whose qualities, we might have thought, promised them better success, have failed as utterly as other nations have failed elsewhere. Eighteen years of hard campaigning and now over seventy years of complete occupation and government have wearied Arab and native into a kind of semi-subservience, but the native heart is more alienated from the conqueror than ever. He remains rigidly closed to all Christianising influence, and if he continues to reject all attempts to civilise him he must inevitably disappear.

Look where we will, for the native the future of Africa looms darkly. From the European there is not a glimmer of hope. One chance alone remains, and that is that some Mahometan Power should arise which by the power it possesses of really reaching the native soul, may confer upon him some civilisation, perhaps not the best, but such a one as should prepare him for the reception of a better.

The one Power which might perhaps be trusted with the fulfilment of so noble a mission is Egypt; Egypt which, after a long and hard novitiate, has learned from Europe all that it may learn for its betterment. But it is only as a free nation, with a proud consciousness of itself, that Egypt could act. And why should we not admit that Egypt has ended her years of apprenticeship, and that the hour has struck when she may be entrusted with the guidance of her own career, a career on which hangs the last despairing hope of African regeneration?

Here we will leave the reader, asking him to ponder whether the same counsel which political interest dictates is not also whispered in his ear by the pleading voice of humanity.

THE END

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